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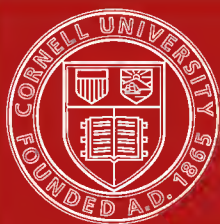
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SUVOROF

## MILITARY HISTORY

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*Alexander Suvorov*

*From an original drawing by Jos. Kreutzinger, 1799*

*Sent from Vienna in July 1799 and published in London  
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# SUVOROF

BY W. LYON BLEASE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR

C. E. CALLWELL, K.C.B.

LONDON : CONSTABLE AND  
COMPANY, LIMITED 1920



**TO**  
**MY WIFE**





## FOREWORD

AN account of the circumstances in which this book was written will best explain its many deficiencies. I began to write it in 1917, when I was on the Staff of a Hospital in Petrograd. Owing to the pressure of my ordinary duties, which were at intervals considerable, I was unable to spend any time in the Imperial Library, where a large collection of papers relating to Suvorof, the Suvorovskii Sbornik, had been deposited. Still less was I able to consult the Military Records at Moscow. I was confined to the study of matter already published, and in Petrograd to such volumes as I could find in the booksellers' shops. Fortunately these were numerous. In November, I was sent down to the Field Hospital on the Roumanian Front, taking with me my manuscript and two or three books. The rest of my library, at some volumes of which I had hardly glanced, I left in a big box. This has by now, I suppose, fallen with my spare kit into the hands of pillagers. At any rate, it was left behind when the Base Hospital went home, and I cannot get hold of it. From Roumania I was recalled to Odessa, where, for the first time, I got into a Public Library. To the City Librarian, Professor Popruzhenko, and his assistant, Mr. Deribas,

I am much indebted. I am even more obliged to Mr. Edmund Harris, in whose house I lived. His own library was very useful, and his natural hospitality seemed to be only aggravated by the triple alliance against him of pneumonia, extortionate demands from his workmen, and a civil war in which his house played an involuntary but conspicuous part. I regret that his recent death in exile prevents me from giving him a copy of the book. I never knew a man who bore with more fortitude and sweetness of temper the blows of a remorseless fortune.

As there has been published in Russian an enormous quantity of literature about Suworof, I think I have been able to gather enough raw material to make a substantially true picture of him. For military events I have been compelled to rely on such books as Pyetrof's *Histories of the Turkish Wars* and Milyutin's superb *History of the War of 1799*, with its abundant citations from original documents. There are as many anecdotes about Suworof as about our Doctor Johnson, and many of these have been published in one or other of the numerous periodicals interested in Russian antiquities and history. I have, with one or two exceptions, repeated none that are not related by honest eye-witnesses. On the whole, I think that this book will be found to contain as much essential truth as many which are more ostentatiously based upon manuscript authorities, and indeed seem to bear not a little of the original dust upon their pages.

My principal omissions are English, French, German,

Polish, and Italian books. I had not time to learn the Polish language as well as the Russian. Of French and German books I could find only a few in Russia, and of English and Italian, none at all. It is hardly less difficult to lay hands on some of them in England. I have abandoned all hope of getting the books that I left in Petrograd. The Bibliography I have made as complete as I can, though I have not been able to recollect the exact titles of all my Petrograd books.

I am very greatly indebted to my wife, who at various times has reduced the whole of my rough manuscript to legibility, and in the end spent many hours in Japan in pounding a clumsy typewriter and making the thing fit for the printer.

W. L. B.



## INTRODUCTION

IN the following pages the life story is told of a very remarkable man, of a principal performer in some of the most memorable events in modern history, of the foremost of Russians with the solitary exception of Peter the Great. They present us with the picture of a singular personality, of an ardent patriot, of an exceptionally brilliant and successful soldier. Strange as were Suvorof's ways and interesting as was his individuality in his private capacity, it is rather in his character of leader of troops and commander in the field that his career must ever be instructive to posterity and attractive to the student of history.

Fought for the most part in regions far removed from centres of culture and of military thought, his campaigns have perhaps scarcely been studied as assiduously in the past as they ought to have been, seeing how varied and how far-reaching are the lessons that are to be deduced from them. They shed a beacon light upon the art of countering the mercurial methods of the partisan, which often prove so great a bugbear to leaders of a trained and disciplined soldiery. Of effective achievement mainly and primarily attributable to the fostering of mobility and elasticity in the field, they afford numerous, diversified and striking examples. Those dramatic events of 1800 in Switzerland—the desperate affray by the Devil's Bridge, the sudden tidings of Korsakof's discomfiture, the escape from the trap, the weary retreat over the heights to Chur, admirably indicate what strategical uncertainties and

perplexing tactical problems a general may find himself beset with when he undertakes operations at the head of a formidable force in a mountain country. Nor does the history of war furnish us with many more convincing examples of the dangers and difficulties which assail armies in the field when the plans of their leaders are interfered with by chatterers in distant capitals, than is to be found in the conduct of the Aulic Council and its consequences, after the famous Russian chieftain had been entrusted with the task of driving back the French legions out of the territories which they had overrun.

Amongst prominent figures in history, few have been more traduced than has the victor of the Ruimnik and the Trebbia. In consequence of his enthusiasm for monarchical autocracy, Suvorof was anathema to French writers of the Revolutionary era, and they painted his actions in the darkest colours. His name has in this country been too much associated with Lord Byron's mordant and oft-quoted line, "hero, buffoon, half demon and half dirt." Granted that the great soldier was something of a buffoon, the reference to dirt amounted to a cruel libel and the epithet "demon" was wholly inappropriate. *Don Juan* pictures him in connection with the taking of Izmail, and, as his conduct on that occasion unquestionably was open to some criticism, it may not be out of place to say a word upon this subject.

The fortress had been formally summoned and the Grand Vizier had, very properly, met the summons with an uncompromising refusal. Military authorities in the seventeenth century, and before that era, had been in substantial agreement that a stronghold which would not yield after having been called upon to do so was liable if taken by assault to be sacked and to have its garrison put to the sword. Cromwell always pleaded that no quarter need be given in such a case, and he acted on that principle at Basing House and at Drogheda, although at Gowran House and Old Castletown he contented himself with the massacre of the defending



officers, sparing the rank and file. As a matter of fact, fastnesses did in practice in those days in nineteen cases out of twenty haul down their flag rather than stand an assault, in deference to what was to all intents and purposes a law of war. With the development of modern ideas and humaner methods, such drastic procedure fell to a great extent into desuetude. But the principle had not been forgotten. Writing to Canning some thirty years after the fall of Izmail, Wellington declared that he would have considered himself justified in putting the garrisons of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz to the sword, and that had he done so at the former it would have saved him 5000 men before the latter place of arms. Twenty years after Izmail, Suchet deliberately slaughtered large part of the garrison of Tarragona, and he bitterly upbraided his opponent, the wounded Contreras, for persisting in the defence of an untenable town. It has always to be remembered that the vanquished in a combat can only pray for quarter as an act of grace; they cannot claim it as a right, although it nowadays is almost always granted.

But in the case of storming a fortress this question of quarter to its defenders, as also that of the conduct of the victors towards its citizens, was influenced by the theory that the assailants were entitled to pillage the place. That theory no doubt dated back to the medieval days when warfare was prosecuted with the utmost savagery; but the theory had been carried on into much later days by the mercenaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for whom prospects and possibilities of plunder provided one of the main inducements to serve. Traditions are amongst soldiers carried on from one generation to another, and there can be no doubt that at the time of Izmail and Seringapatam and San Sebastian and Tarragona the rank and file of European armies, even perhaps some of the officers, were imbued with the notion that the sacking of a fortified city which had been taken by storm was a

procedure that was sanctioned by precedent and was warranted by the circumstances of the case.

It will be urged that there was a very substantial difference between what occurred within the Peninsular strongholds taken by British troops, and what occurred within the enceinte of the Turkish fortress on the Lower Danube. The excesses committed in the one case were entirely unauthorised, whereas at Izmail massacre and rapine enjoyed up to a point the full approval of Suworof and his lieutenants. At Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz there moreover were no reprisals on the part of the victorious troops against the vanquished garrisons, whereas thousands of Osmanli warriors were slaughtered at Izmail without mercy.

But in connection with this latter topic we should not forget that the conditions in the cases of the Spanish places of arms differed widely from those that obtained within the Ottoman ramparts. Resistance collapsed as soon as the assailants had won their way within the enceintes of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, whereas there was desperate fighting in the streets of Izmail; and at San Sebastian, where defence continued after the stormers had forced the breaches, the conquerors took a heavy toll of their antagonists. In so far as the outrages to which the citizens were subjected are concerned, the Russians could at least excuse themselves on the ground that Izmail was for the most part peopled by Turks; the inhabitants of the Spanish fortresses on the other hand were friends of the assailants, not enemies, but that availed them little. Finally, it has to be borne in mind that warfare as between Muscovite and Osmanli had for years past been carried on in ruthless fashion, that animosity between these hereditary foes was stimulated on both sides by religious fervour, and that there is not the slightest reason to suppose that Ottoman troops who had fought their way into a Russian city would have displayed forbearance. Nobody to-day would suggest that the bloodshed and

pillage which continued at Izmail after the defence had been beaten down were not to be deprecated, nor that Suvorof's attitude in connection with the matter was not open to censure. But the case against him was not in reality so bad as some have pretended.

Advance in the art of fortification and in military science completely transformed the conditions of fortress warfare during the century that followed Izmail and Praga, and it is interesting to note that, on the occasion of the one signal instance of a storming that has occurred in these later years, the victorious assailants were Russians and the defenders were Turks. That was at Kars in 1877. But Kars was then secured by detached forts, and it was the detached forts that were taken by storm. There was no question of street fighting. It is not solely due to the relatively indulgent methods of conducting war which—before the Germans re-introduced in Belgium and France the practices of a ruder age—were supposed to prevail in these later days, that the horrors of Magdeburg and Drogheda and Izmail are hardly likely to repeat themselves in the course of struggles between civilised races. Long-range artillery, and the influence which this has exerted over the laying out of defence works, also affect this question.

The uncouth antics and wayward outbursts which make Suvorof cut so strange a figure in our eyes, were perhaps to some extent a pose; but they manifested themselves too frequently and at too inappropriate moments to leave much doubt that this remarkable leader of men was not in all respects quite right in the head. Still, history indicates that the type of warrior of ardent temperament who is ever bent on violent offensives when in the field, is apt to prove himself eccentric in other matters. Blücher was a case in point. In our own annals we have had Nelson, Wolfe, and the "Salamander" Cutts. His eccentricities have perhaps been one cause why Suvorof's outstanding merits as a commander have hardly been sufficiently

recognised outside the ranks of his own countrymen. And yet those eccentricities were one of his most precious assets as a chieftain lording it over the impressionable Russian peasantry who composed the rank and file of the armies that he led from victory to victory. His singular personality was a cardinal factor in his handling of his men. His demeanour, his grotesque posturings, his exclamatory communications, may seem to us the tricks of a mountebank, to the soldiers of Catherine and Paul they endeared a general in whom officers and men came to place implicit trust.

Next to Frederick the Great, Napoleon and Wellington, unquestionably the greatest soldier of the last half of the eighteenth century and of the wars that followed the French Revolution, Suvorof was in some respects more successful than either of the two former. He never practically had a really untoward reverse on the battlefield to deplore. There was no Kolin and no Kunersdorf in his case to dim the glories of Fokchany and of the passage of the St. Gothard. He met with no discomfiture in combat so distressing as befell Napoleon at Aspern and at Leipzig. Almost as uniformly victorious in action as the Iron Duke, Suvorof never experienced so mortifying a failure when compassing the downfall of a stronghold as Wellington encountered before Burgs in Old Castile. He proved himself in the course of his many years of active service in various theatres of war to be an exponent of well-nigh every type of effective military operation, adapting his methods to the circumstances of each particular case with un-failing originality and with consistent good fortune.

He mastered the art of vanquishing elusive guerilla bands, whether the bands were composed of Poles fighting under educated leaders or were made up of nomad Tartars, children of the limitless steppes. Ottoman valour and tenacity behind entrenchments had become traditional from the date on which the tide of Turkish penetration westwards began at last to ebb ; but

Suvorof never quailed when confronted with the Sultan's legions no matter how strongly they might be posted, and he overcame them under such conditions by tactics peculiarly his. Face to face with practised French commanders such as were Macdonald and Joubert, he more than held his own in combat. A plainsman himself and at the head of plainsmen, he nevertheless contrived to prosecute one of the most remarkable mountain campaigns in the history of war; for a parallel to his forcing his way over the high Alps from Airolo to Altdorf in defiance of stalwart opposition, we have almost to go back to the days of Hannibal. He received his baptism of fire as a young staff officer in the Seven Years' War, winning his spurs as member of the most lethargic army in Europe; thanks to his precepts and his heartening example, that army less than a generation later rivalled in dash and mobility the fiery levies who fought under the eyes of Dumouriez and Hoche. We may occasionally feel tempted, when conning over the record of what he accomplished, to criticise the procedure adopted in some particular case, to look askance at a policy which verged at times seemingly upon the reckless. And yet we have to admit that, whether he set to work in the right way or in the wrong way, he almost invariably conquered in the end. In war nothing succeeds like success. The result, it is, that counts, and not the means by which the result has been arrived at.

Nor were Suvorof's services to his country at an end when the old man passed away, ignored by his Sovereign and neglected by the court. His teachings and his theory of making war were not forgotten. The tale of his achievements was to animate coming generations of Russian warriors in many a strenuous campaign, and on many a hard-fought field. Had there been no Suvorof tradition, would some of his successors in charge of Muscovite armies, one wonders, have won the signal triumphs that they did? Would Diebitch have made

his swoop almost to the Golden Horn in 1829, and would Paskievitch have been simultaneously carrying all before him by lightning strokes dealt the Osmanli in the inhospitable, roadless tracts of Kars and Erzerum ? Would Tcherniaief in 1865, master of only 2000 infantry and a dozen guns, have stormed the great walled city of Tashkend defended by 30,000 fighting men ? Would Gourko have passed the Balkans in mid-winter in 1877, and have come down like an avalanche upon Thrace before the bewildered enemy could gather his scattered legions together to arrest the rush ? The glory of All the Russias is under eclipse, their greatness has for the moment passed away. If ever there is to be a revival, if ever those teeming Slav multitudes are to recover the place in the world which they occupied before the upheaval of 1917, the memory of such men as Suvorof will assuredly have played its part in restoring an emotional race to sanity and in resuscitating the patriotism of a nation that has fallen from its high estate.

C. E. C.

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## CHAPTER I

### PREPARATION

Ancestry—Early life—Education—Enlistment and promotions—The Seven Years' War—Suvorof's appreciation of its lessons—Regimental command—A letter—Training his men.

OF the ancestry and early life of Alexander Vassilyevitch Suvorof very little is known. His family was of Swedish origin. Probably its founder was a man called Yuda Suvor, one of the descendants of a Swedish immigrant who settled near Moscow in the sixteenth century. A certain Ivan Grigoryevitch Suvorof was a clerk attached to the Pryeobrazhenski regiment in the time of Peter the Great. By his second marriage this Ivan had a son Vassili, who became the father of the great Alexander. Vassili was a man of good capacity, proof against bribery and influence, a good linguist, and rather more than ordinarily careful in money matters. Born in 1705, he entered the administrative side of the military service, and in 1753 was made General and a member of the Military College. Catherine had a very high opinion of him on account of his "incorruptible honesty."<sup>1</sup> In 1720, while still a boy, he married Avdotya or Evdokia Theodosyevna Manukof, the daughter of a secretary who in 1737 was tried for the misappropriation of funds in his charge.<sup>2</sup> There were

<sup>1</sup> See Catherine's letter to Dr. Zimmerman, 15th January 1790, *Russkaya Starina* (1887), 8. The Military College had authority over all matters except the actual conduct of war—commissariat, equipment, and the like.

<sup>2</sup> For some notes about him see *Russkaya Starina* (1900), civ. 258.

three children of this marriage — Anna, Maria, and Alexander. Alexander was born at Moscow on the 24th November 1730.

Nothing in his ancestry seems to have foreshadowed the coming greatness of Alexander Vassilyevitch. If there were any remarkable members of it, they were mute and inglorious. His father was a respectable administrator; his mother died fifteen years after his birth, and no note of her appearance, character, or influence upon his education has been preserved. But from one source or another the boy had got some unusual aptitude. His health was bad. He was short, thin, and ugly. Nothing in his body suggested power. Nevertheless, his eyes must have had some of the keenness and fire which they preserved until the end, and the spirit which looked out from them can never have been feeble. His father intended to find him a post of some civil kind, and he learned, not very well, French, German, and a little Italian. These languages, and the ordinary equipment of a civilised man, reading and writing and the like, were the sum of his regular studies. But his private reading took him into military history and biography. There he read with passion. Some chance encounter among his father's books must have set him on the track down which he was to travel almost until the day of his death. For study of this kind his energy seemed inexhaustible, and, without any of the common childish liking for the pomp of war, he devoted himself, while yet a boy, earnestly to military service. Ordinary companions and ordinary games he had none. When he was not shut in his garret poring over books, he was galloping on horseback in the sun and wind or rain, to harden his body and accustom it to the fatigues of war.

This overmastering desire for a military career received no encouragement from Vassili Suworof. But the puzzled and anxious father was wise enough not to resort to threats and punishments, and if he did not help the



boy, he at least let him alone. There was, at last, a crisis. When Alexander was eleven years old, Hannibal, the negro general of Peter the Great, paid a visit to Moscow.<sup>1</sup> The father had the good sense to ask his old colleague's opinion, and Hannibal advised him to let the boy follow his own bent. Vassili gave way. Any youth who wished to become an officer must first pass through the lower ranks, and this wise regulation of Peter the Great was usually evaded by the enrolment of mere babies as privates in the Guards. By the time the child had become a man, he had nominally completed his service as a private and a non-commissioned officer, and could proceed at once along the primrose path of promotion by favour. Alexander Suvorof came late into the service, and he began at the bottom. In 1742 he was enrolled in the Semyonovski Guards, and in 1745 he began actually to serve.

The interval he had spent in study, no less ardent and more systematic than before. Plutarch, Cornelius Nepos, and Julius Caesar were his classical authors, Montecucculi and Turenne among the moderns, and he got such acquaintance as was possible with the campaigns of Alexander and Hannibal, of Condé, Prince Eugen of Savoy, and Maréchal de Saxe. Hübner and Rollin gave him some general history and geography, Wolf and Leibnitz some philosophy. For artillery and fortification he had Vauban, and his father was able here at least to give him help. When, at the age of fifteen, he put on his private's uniform, he knew more of the history and art of war than most of the carpet officers to whom he had to present arms.

This life of reading and meditation continued after he joined his regiment. He did not throw himself into practice as fiercely as into theory, and his work was apparently not well done. No doubt, he had already determined to be a great general, but he was careless about making himself a perfect private. His natural

✓ <sup>1</sup> This Hannibal was an ancestor of the poet Pushkin.

independence of temper and hatred of forms seem to have led him to avoid some of his duties. He did not live in barracks, but with an uncle, who had a commission in the Pryeobrazhenski Guards; he preferred light duties to heavy; and on one occasion he played the malingerer. Most of his biographers have represented him as an ardent soldier. But the latest research has shown that he did not work with the unquenchable happiness of a young man whose trade is also his hobby.<sup>1</sup> One incident of this period he recalled in later life. He was doing sentry duty at Mon Plaisir in the time of the Empress Elizabeth. She passed by him and offered him a silver rouble. He refused it, saying that the regulations forbade a sentry to take money. "Young man," said the Empress, "you know your duty," and offered him her hand to kiss. Then, throwing the rouble at his feet, "I'll put the rouble there on the ground; when you're relieved, pick it up." He took the coin in due course, and kept it till the day of his death.<sup>2</sup>

Few other details of his service have come down to us. His companions were not intimate with him, or they were not of the sort who compose memoirs and diaries, and no letters or memoranda of his own have been preserved. What he looked like, thought, and did during these years of formation cannot be known. The bare facts of his successive promotions are almost all that is on record. In 1747 he was made Corporal, in 1751 Sergeant. From May to October 1752 he was engaged in carrying despatches to Dresden and Vienna. On the 15th April 1754 he became at last a commissioned officer, and received a Lieutenancy in the Ingermanland regiment of infantry. By some freak of fortune, his earliest duties were purely administrative, and it is doubtful whether this born leader of men ever com-

<sup>1</sup> Maslovski; in the *Russian Biographical Dictionary*, x. 9. This part of the article is based on "Suvorof Soldat" (documents of the *Archives of the Semyonovski Regiment*), Petrograd, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> Fuchs, *Misc.*, 63.

manded a company. He was two years with his first regiment, but seems to have spent a considerable part of the time on leave, engaged in family affairs. In January 1756 he became Senior Commissary of Stores, in the following October Lieutenant General Auditor, attached to the Military College, and in December Senior Major. What the disciple of Caesar and Prince Eugen thought of all this store-keeping and clerking, flour and porridge and pickled cabbage, reports and instructions and accounts, we can only guess. It seems that his father must have been using his interest in the administrative departments to get Alexander on in the service. From the latter's frequent and unrestrained expressions of feeling in later life, it is obvious that he would rather have been drilling a single company or squadron than be involved in this domestic business. Nevertheless, his chance came in the great war which broke out in 1756.<sup>1</sup>

The Seven Years' War gave Suvorof his first view of active service. He persuaded his father to use his influence, and as early as 1757 he was sent to the front, but in the capacity of Ober-Proviantmeister.<sup>2</sup> His duties were still administrative, the purchase and forwarding of stores from Memel to the troops actually in the field. But in 1759 he was appointed, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, to the staff of Prince Volkonski, and afterwards to that of Count Fermor, who, in the previous year, had dragged an unwieldy mass of Russian soldiers through the indecisive battle of Zorndorf. Fermor was superseded by Count Saltikof, but remained with the army, and Suvorof was therefore present at the complete but profitless victory of Kunersdorf. He was a mere spectator, but this unparalleled example of

<sup>1</sup> Apparently he read in this year two papers before the newly founded Society of Lovers of Russian Literature at Petrograd. They were dialogues, the first between Cortez and Montezuma, the second between Alexander and Herostratos. Neither has any literary merit. Pyetrushhevski (2nd edition), 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Russkaya Starina* (1887), lvi. 212.

refusal to follow up a victory must have made a profound impression. Had Suvorof been in the place of Saltikof, nothing could have saved Frederick from destruction, and the whole history of modern Germany would have been different.

In the subsequent operations of the war he took a more active part. In 1760 he was in Tottleben's raid on Berlin. In the next year, in command of part of General Berg's light horse, he distinguished himself in the affair of Reichenbach and in raids upon Frederick's entrenched camp at Schweidnitz. During the siege of Colberg by Rummyantsof he was constantly engaged with the troops of Platen, who attempted to throw supplies into the place. Once he was wounded, two horses were killed under him, and he was twice within an ace of being taken prisoner. He seems to have behaved on every occasion like a gallant cavalry officer, and Berg recommended him as "quick in reconnaissance, bold in fight, and cool in danger."<sup>1</sup> The campaign of 1761 was the last in which the Russian Army took part. The death of the Empress Elizabeth in December was followed by the conclusion of peace by Peter III.

The Seven Years' War thus gave Suvorof considerable experience of all sorts of military activity. But more important than the mere practice in the handling of troops was the understanding which he obtained in this war of the way in which all war should be conducted. All Europe had much to learn from a struggle in which a single state with a highly disciplined army had made head against a combination of much greater apparent strength. But the lessons of the war were for the most part not well learned, not even in Prussia itself. The extraordinary successes of Frederick cast a spell over the military minds of the Continent, and his strategy,

<sup>1</sup> Pyetrushevski, 15. Suvorof's work during the Seven Years' War is described in detail in *Campagnes du Feldmarechal Souwarrow*, i. 2, *et seq.* The *Campagnes* are a pirated reprint of a translation of Von Anting's biography, of which the greater part was read and corrected by Suvorof himself.

his tactics, his drill, and even his uniforms were imitated with slavish fidelity for a whole generation after his death. The results were generally disastrous. In fact, the chances of a repetition of any particular combination of military events are very slight. "War," said Thucydides, twenty-one hundred years before Frederick, "is the last of all things to go according to programme." Strategy is nothing more than putting a force into the position from which it can strike with most effect, and Frederick's plans were successful, not in virtue of their formal perfection, but because he could rely upon himself and his subordinates to execute marches according to programme, without delay or deviation. As with his strategy, so with his tactics. His turning movements and flank attacks succeeded because his men could carry them out against the enemy who opposed them. There was no special worth in such tactics as against the French armies of the Revolution, which attacked in column at great speed and broke the centre before the wing had closed upon them. The value of Frederick's drill, as of all drill, lay in this, that it accustomed his men to the instantaneous obedience of orders, and made it certain that on the field of battle the word of command would be followed by the execution of the required manœuvre in the shortest possible time. In short, the successes of Frederick, as of all great commanders, were due to the moral qualities with which he, his generals, and his troops carried out his designs, and not to any mystic properties of the designs themselves. His imitators failed because they and their armies fell short of him and his armies in practical rather than theoretical capacity. They missed the real secret: the boldness of his strokes and the swiftness of his recoveries.

Suvorof was not the man to fall into such an error, and the incompetence of the Allies, and especially of the Russians, made a profound impression upon him.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> A Russian infantry regiment required an hour to deploy into battle formation! Vassilyef, *Suvorof*, 16.

soldier will study the failures of his predecessors more safely than their successes. He can learn to avoid their mistakes, but nothing but his own genius will enable him to imitate their triumphs. Suvorof's natural bias against formalism was encouraged by the very events which drove most of his contemporaries into excess of it. They thought that Frederick succeeded through the perfection of his forms. He saw that Frederick's opponents failed through want of mobility, decision, and readiness to take risks. The imitators aggravated want of energy by loading themselves with forms, while he came to the bold and sound conclusion that forms were worse than useless, except as the channels of energy. With him, energy was first and last. "Remember," he said, "that victory depends on the legs; the hands are only the instruments of victory." The essential contrast between the military sincerity of Frederick and the sluggishness and indecision of his opponents thus produced in Suvorof an effect diametrically opposed to that produced in almost all his contemporaries, and made him the most original commander in Europe between Frederick and Napoleon.

On the 26th August 1762, Suvorof was promoted to the rank of Colonel. His first command was the Astrakhan regiment of infantry. Tsar Peter was removed soon after the conclusion of peace, and Suvorof actually received his promotion from the hands of Catherine. During her absence at Moscow for the coronation, his regiment was in garrison at Petersburg, and after her return, on the 6th April 1763, he was transferred to the Suzdal regiment, which took the place of the Astrakhan regiment. The change from the vigorous life of a cavalry leader on active service to the sober management of a garrison unit must have been infinitely depressing. But material for piecing together a continuous narrative of this part of his life is wanting. One private letter alone has been preserved, the first of a long series of complaints. It was written in bad

French on the 7th February 1764 to Louise Ivanovna Kulyevna.<sup>1</sup> His epistolary style was always disorderly, sometimes incoherent, and in this letter, as usual, he spilled his thoughts on to his paper without any elegance.

Come here (Petersburg); you will be three or four times a week at a masked ball, two or three times at the theatre; I profit by it as much as my health allows me, for unfortunately, though I'm never in bed and am not keeping my room, but the goodness of the waters of the Neva has so weakened my stomach that it revolts against me continually, and the air here has bred worms in my belly, endlessly, which torment me to death; the pains in my head and chest do not diminish,

Thin and pale as a homeless ass,  
My skeleton chatters its ghastly jaw;  
Like a ghost through the realm of air I pass,  
Like a ship that sinks in the ocean's maw.

I am almost face to face with death. He drags me step by step from the world. But I hate him, I never want to die so ignominiously, and I should wish never to suffer it otherwise than on the field of Mars.

This gloomy letter represented, no doubt, only a mood. But throughout his life, Suvorof was inclined to be unhappy everywhere except on active service, and his passion for hard work in the field and personal distinction was never fully satisfied. Nevertheless, the mere management and training of men gave him some pleasure, and these bursts of complaint must have alternated with periods of real happiness. On the 1st July 1765 his Suzdal regiment was sent to Ladoga, where he made his first experiments in his special methods. He was far enough from the capital, and the loose organisation of the Russian military system allowed him in great measure to follow his own bent, without much interference from inspectors and sticklers for uniformity.

Some of his activities were remote from ordinary

<sup>1</sup> It is in the *Sbornik*; printed in *Letters and Papers*, p. 23.

conceptions of the duties of a regimental commander. Service in the Russian Army was practically for life, and a regiment could therefore be organised like a great family. The commanding officer could, if he pleased, acquire an enduring influence over his men. This Suvorof set himself to do. He built, besides a cavalry stable, a church and two schools, one for officers' children, and the other for those of private soldiers, and he laid out a garden in which his men worked. But his principal task was the training of his men as soldiers. His orders to his troops and his official letters to his superior officer, General Weimarn, show that he was already putting into practice the theories which he afterwards elaborated for whole armies. He knew that victory fell not to the commander who worked out the most ingenious paper plans, but to him who could call upon his troops, at a moment's notice, to do a two days' march in one day, and fight a battle at the end of it. First and foremost he put the moral equipment of his men. Courage, self-confidence, and the endurance of fatigue were the cardinal virtues. The soldier must be ready and able to go anywhere and face anything, and the very idea of retreat must not be allowed to enter his head.

"Help, danger," and other figments of the imagination are all right for old women, who are afraid to get off the stove because they may break their legs, and for lazy, luxurious people, and blockheads—for miserable self-protection, which in the end, whether good or bad, in fact, always passes for bravery with the story-tellers.<sup>1</sup>

Pusillanimous cavalry tactics he specially condemned. Shock tactics were seldom practised even at this date. The Russian regular cavalryman was still a man who used carbine and pistols rather than a swordsman. The Cossack was little better than a forager.

For cavalry to use firearms is extremely undesirable ; sword and lance are incomparably better ; there has

<sup>1</sup> Pyetrushevski, i. 66.



sometimes been an unexpected opportunity for firing during a pursuit; but even in this case cold steel is better, because one may find one's self without a shot in one's carbine and cannot afford to waste time in re-loading. . . . In pursuit the cavalry must simply charge boldly with an unbroken front; except the flankers, who may fire pistols; but only with careful aim.<sup>1</sup>

This desire to accustom his men to fighting at close quarters led him into unusual paths. He enlisted both housewifery and religion in the service of the good cause. He not only built a church, but personally attended to the prayers, and the washing, patching, and darning, of his men.

The German or French peasant knows his Church, his faith, and his prayers; the Russian hardly knows his village priest—in my regiment we taught these peasants a few prayers. So they got to perceive that in everything God was with us, and strove towards honour. The officers know that I myself am not ashamed to work at this. . . . Suvorof was Major, and Adjutant, and everything down to Corporal; I myself looked into everything and could teach everybody.

Every man passed through my hands, and he was told that nothing more remained for him to know, if only he did not forget what he had learned. Thus he was given confidence in himself, the foundation of bravery.<sup>2</sup>

This was not mere pettifoggery. The Russian army was recruited from among the serfs, and consisted in great part of those whom their masters could most easily spare. Idleness, drunkenness, and dishonesty were thus common qualities, almost qualifications. The Slav lethargy and indifference to appearances, which made even the modern Russian Army the least smart in Europe, allowed personal slovenliness full play in the days of Catherine, and such discipline as existed depended largely on brutal and ferocious punishments. Suvorof tried to improve the character of his men by encouraging

<sup>1</sup> Pyetrushevski, 72, 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

godliness and cleanliness together. His regiment was a sort of reformatory school as well as an instrument of war. In the soil thus fertilised, he planted the specific military virtues of obedience, endurance, and speed. He was most original in keeping his men as much as possible on a war footing. Marches by day and night, wading and swimming across rivers, and sham fights were of constant occurrence, and were undertaken without warning or preparation.<sup>1</sup> On one occasion he suddenly ordered his troops to take a monastery by storm, and sent them tumbling over the wall among the monks, who must have taken them for a pack of devils. All these experiments in command were sketches of his later system. He practised his men in hard realities, setting his mind to making them healthy, bold, and hardy, without regard to the niceties of forms. The specifically Prussian virtues, mechanical exactness and complete moral subjection of the subordinate to the commander, were not there. For those he had to substitute other things more suited to the Slav character; personal indifference to hardship, and an almost parental relation between officer and soldier. It is not difficult to see in this Ladoga period of Suvorof's life an elaboration of the lessons of the Prussian War.

No doubt, he was already master of the art of getting on to intimate terms with his men. He was not yet famous, and there was no Boswell to set him down as he lived among his men at Ladoga. But he must have already been something of the jesting, porridge-eating, back-slapping brother-in-arms that he remained throughout the time of his greatest fame. He was never happier than when he had pulled off his jacket and shirt, and sprawled half-naked in the sun, exchanging jokes on terms of friendship with all. He spared no man while work was to be done, but he encouraged liberty, equality, and fraternity when it was finished. If he saw that they darned their socks and washed

<sup>1</sup> Pyetrushevski, 68.

their shirts, it was not as a schoolmarm, but as one of themselves. Hard work seemed lighter when he shared it, and rough living lost its discomfort when the Colonel himself endured it with the rest. His men grew to like doing their utmost, because they grew to like giving him pleasure. By encouragement and example he wound his unit up to a high pitch, and in 1769 he got the opportunity of playing upon the instrument which he had made.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST POLISH WAR

The State of Poland—Entry of Suvorof on the scene in 1770—Guerilla warfare—Battle of Landskron, 1771—Battle of Stalovitch—Correspondence with the Commander-in-Chief—Siege of Cracow, 1772—Partition—Correspondence.

It is a matter for regret that much of Suvorof's military reputation depends on his successes in Polish Wars. He was thus the instrument of one of the great political crimes of modern history. In the second half of the eighteenth century the situation of Poland was one with which students of modern Imperialism are familiar. The internal condition of the country had long been one of weakness and uncertainty, and powerful neighbours waited for the time when an excuse for intervention should offer itself. Russia, Prussia, and Austria, restrained not by compunction for the perishing nationality of Poland, but by their mutual jealousy and distrust, waited and manœuvred for the moment when they could decently step in to restore that Order, in whose name as many crimes have been committed as in that of Liberty. Each maintained its group of partisans in the country, and through this channel administered, from time to time, further doses of the poison from which the destined victim was suffering. The elective monarchy, and the *liberum veto*, or right of a single member of the Diet to prohibit the execution of any of its decrees, made the Polish nobility a very convenient instrument of foreign intrigue. By playing the jealousy of the nobility against

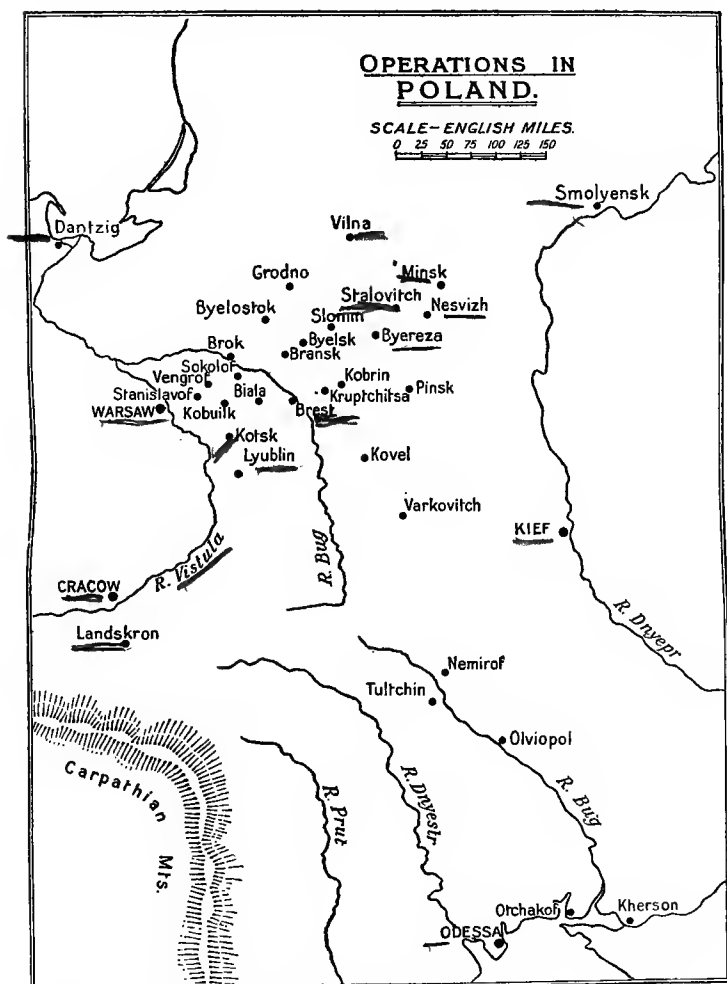
the King and the jealousy of one group of nobles against another, the neighbouring Powers were able to infect the whole state with a creeping palsy. The peasants were mere serfs. The industry and commerce of the country were in the hands of Jews, and there was no Polish middle class. Political power was concentrated in a small space, and pressure upon a very limited area moved the whole fabric.

Towards the end of the third quarter of the century the ill condition became acute, and the methods of the expectant heirs more direct. The collapse of the power of the Crown, the factiousness of the nobility, and the complete impotence of the mass of the people made possible the three successive partitions by which the Kingdom of Poland was extinguished. The first appropriation of territory was made by Austria in 1770, though a formal partition did not take place until two years later. But the earliest steps were taken by Russia. In 1764 Catherine II. secured the election of Stanislaw Poniatowski, a discarded favourite of her own, as King of Poland. His election was accompanied and secured by the despatch of Russian troops and the expenditure of a considerable sum of Russian money. This election did not, nor was it intended to, put an end to the political disorganisation of the country. The new King was chosen by the Russian Empress, not because of his capacity for making head against the truculent nobility, but because of his incapacity, of his inevitable need of further assistance from the Power which had set him on the throne. It is not the habit of such an Imperialism as that of Catherine of Russia to spoil its own chances by nominating a strong man where a puppet will suffice. In such a case a lively sense of impotence in the nominee is the first condition of his appointment. The advantages which he can acquire from the appearance of Royalty are to be used for the advantage of his patron. The real governor remains for the time being out of the picture, but near enough to be called in when the

difficulties of the domestic situation make it decent to interfere once more. Stanislav was a good-natured man, of modest character and mediocre capacity. Under these conditions his election did not alter the state of Poland. His partisans, of whom the Princes Czartoryski were the most powerful, aimed at the increase of the authority of the Crown as the only means of checking the growing insolence of the nobility. The alternative, an appeal from the Crown to the common people, did not present itself as an alternative, and the absence of any educated non-noble class would have made such an appeal, in fact, fruitless. The Radziwils, on the other side, headed the defenders of the old system, and while one side talked severely of order, the other declaimed in terms of liberty. Complaints against the Czartoryski were lodged in Petersburg, but Catherine and her advisers were still not prepared for strong measures. The sick man must get a little worse before they would divide his estate.

The religious disease of Poland combined with the political to reduce the strength of the country against permeation from abroad. At the Diet of Vilna in 1563 it had been decreed that all the nobility of whatever faith, provided they were Christians, should have the same political rights. This Toleration Act had been made the basis of more than one subsequent Royal election, and more than one King, in return for Protestant support, had pledged himself to maintain the rights of the Dissidents, most of whom were members of the Greek Church. But the wars of Russia with Sweden gave the Roman Catholics opportunities of which they were not slow to avail themselves, and the members of the Greek and other Dissenting churches began to suffer disabilities and even persecution. Stanislav was inclined to favour them, and Russia and Prussia, to whom religious liberty was as good political coin as anything else, supported him. In 1768 a Diet was requested to confirm the rights of the Dissidents. The opposition was strong, and Prince

Ryepnin, the Russian representative at Warsaw, went so far as to arrest four Roman Catholics and transport



them to Russia. Patriotism wanted no further excuse. On the 1st March 1768 eight of the bolder spirits issued a declaration from Bar, establishing a Polish Confederacy

independent of the foreign Governments and their nominees.<sup>1</sup> The numbers of the confederates grew rapidly. Count Krasinski, and Pulawski, the inspirer of the movement, were chosen as Marshals of the Confederacy, and the revolt assumed a serious appearance.

The affair had now reached the point at which the rival Powers could begin to collect the spoils. It was found necessary to reinforce the Russian troops for the purpose of suppressing the revolt and restoring the power of the Crown. A small army was collected at Smolyensk, under Lieutenant-General Nummers, and Suvorof and his Suzdalskii regiment were included in it. Suvorof was created a Brigadier on the 22nd September 1768, but it was not until February 1770 that he actually handed his regiment over to its new Colonel, Stackelburg. His orders to join Nummers gave him an opportunity of testing the results of his regimental training, and he had every reason to be satisfied. From Ladoga to Smolyensk was more than 570 miles of the worst marching country in Europe. He covered the distance in 30 days; not a single sick man was left behind at Ladoga, six fell ill on the journey, and one died.<sup>2</sup> At Smolyensk he was given the command of a Brigade, comprising four battalions and two squadrons of cavalry.

The events of the next two or three years need not be described in detail. Poland was at that time covered with woods and swamps. The villages and most of the towns were collections of miserable hovels. The roads were mere tracks, passable in summer, but for most of the year filled with mud and water, and the only inns were wayside huts occupied by Jews. The warfare was of the guerilla sort, giving opportunity for individual skill and bravery, but for little on the grand scale. Small bands of partisans moved over the wretched

<sup>1</sup> A Confederacy, according to the Constitution of Poland, was a sort of legalisation of the divine right of rebellion; a formal means of protest against Acts of the Crown.

<sup>2</sup> Pyetrushevski, i. 29.



## THE FIRST POLISH WAR

country, and Prussian and Austrian territory afford them a temporary refuge, in case the local pressure the Russian troops became too strong. Von Weimar the Russian Commander-in-Chief, was a man of more erudition than vigour. Scattered encounters between numerically insignificant bodies of troops took place continually, but the methodical sweeping of the countryside, the only certain way of dealing with such enemies as the Confederates, was not possible to such a man. Von Weimar, especially when he had so few men at his disposal. The Duc de Choiseul, then in power in France, openly supported the Confederates. He had also inspired the Sultan to declare war against Russia, and the doubt strain was too much for the Russian military machine. Nevertheless, for Suvorof, this was an excellent field for his first practical experiments, and he executed some very fine marches and raids. On one occasion, he carried his infantry in carts from Minsk to Warsaw, a distance of 375 miles, in 12 days.<sup>1</sup> On another, he marched 45 miles out from Brest, all night and half the next day on the road, and defeated a detachment of the enemy 2000 strong. In this affair he tried to repeat the English performance at Minden, and charged cavalry with the bayonet; the Poles galloping away without resistance.<sup>2</sup> In the autumn of 1769 he fixed his base of operations at Lyublin, and from that centre struck out now in one direction, now in another, as he received news of the approach of the enemy parties. On one of these expeditions he fell into the Vistula. A burgher grenadier pulled him out by the hair, but he was badly bruised by striking against a pontoon, and was not thoroughly recovered until three months later.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, he had little to do, and his energetic nature chafed in inactivity. On the 1st January 1770 he was pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, i. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Pyetrof. On this occasion, owing to the smallness of his force Suvorof gave orders that quarter should not be given. Nevertheless he brought back about 40 prisoners.

<sup>3</sup> *Campaignes*, i. 37.

moted to the rank of Major-General, but he cared more for work than for anything else, and throughout this year his correspondence is full of complaints. Vigorous operations against the Polish Confederates were impossible, largely because the Turkish threat from the south was so much more formidable. The troops actually in Poland were badly led and wanting in discipline, and Suvorof had constantly to draw attention to the slovenliness, corruption, and plundering habits of those in command of the co-operating detachments. Of one Lieutenant-Colonel Dryevitz he writes sneeringly :

What do I care if he has not studied his Russian grammar for three whole years ? At least I am learning German from him. . . . He's a foreigner, under no ties to Russia, his interest is in prolonging the war, not in cutting it short. His boasts about his victories are sheer emptiness ; they were won by his Russian soldiers. What are these mighty dispositions against the rebels ? Only speed, energy, and the discovery of their whereabouts. His intelligent and strong troops he keeps in a bunch, incapable of dealing a blow, rather than use them intelligently, with the desire of ending this unrest. The use of him as a commander is the shame of those of us who are his seniors in rank, even if without capacity or worth or service equal to his, the shame of Russia, which has long been free from the age of such barbarities as his. While he is carelessly, luxuriously, magnificently making holiday at Cracow, I with a handful of men am compelled to struggle like a Cossack bandit with every cut-throat who comes along.<sup>1</sup>

Suvorof's complaints on this as on other occasions were partly provoked by the foreign origin of their object, and throughout his life he was almost continually jealous and resentful at having to work under or on equal terms with men of inferior capacity to his own. But he was also thoroughly dissatisfied with the necessarily few opportunities of the Polish affair. In the whole of

<sup>1</sup> Pyetrushevski, i. 89. Dryevitz was accused of having cut off the hands of some of his Polish prisoners. *Ibid.* i. 90.

1770 he only twice encountered the enemy in considerable force, and the Russian triumphs over the Turks at Larga, Kagul, and Tchesma held out the promise of much greater things in the other theatre of war.

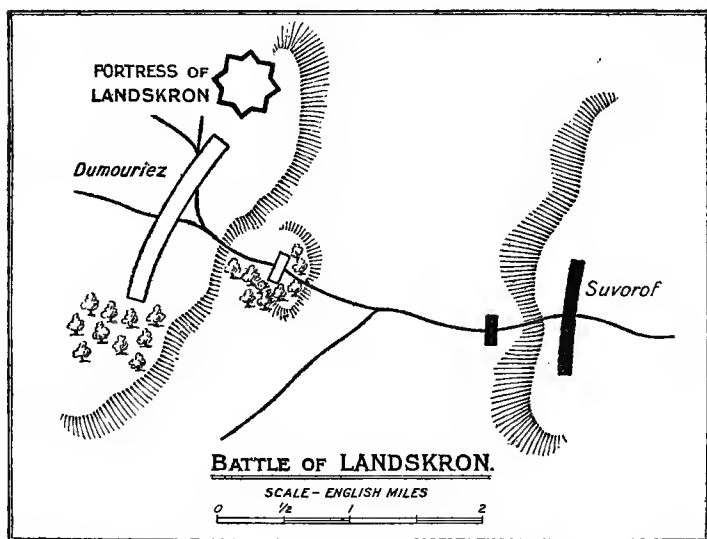
In 1771 the Polish War assumed larger proportions. The indefatigable Choiseul, not contented with his diplomatic success in Turkey, determined to make the threat from the direction of Poland more serious. In 1769 he had sent the Comte de Tollis with a considerable sum of money to stimulate the Confederates, but de Tollis took his money back to Paris, thinking the enterprise hopeless. In his place Choiseul sent Dumouriez, who was greatly disappointed with the numbers and character of the Confederates, but determined to make an attempt to convert their undisciplined rabble into an army. He got officers from France, arms from Silesia and Hungary, transport from Bavaria, and with Austrian and Prussian deserters as a nucleus, worked his miscellaneous collection of men on foot into something approaching military shape. About 60,000 men were ready for the campaign of 1771, and in the spring Dumouriez began a vigorous offensive from the Austrian frontier, proposing to cut off the scattered Russian posts, and even threaten the rear of Rumyantsov's army operating against the Turks in Moldavia. His first efforts prospered. Several Russian detachments were simultaneously beaten in the plain of Cracow and driven across the Vistula with heavy losses. But the Confederates defeated themselves. With these first victories order disappeared, and the bulk of the army gave itself up to rejoicing and plunder. This was the moment for Suvorof. He had already dispersed several parties of insurgents, and attempted to take the fortress of Landskron by storm. Here, for the time being, he failed, and, in the course of several unsuccessful attacks, almost all his superior officers were wounded, Suvorof himself being grazed by a bullet. But after the occupation of Cracow by Dumouriez he gained his first substantial

victory. Much against his will he was forced to co-operate with Dryevitz, but the result showed that Dryevitz was not so bad as Suvorof had previously made out. On the 10th of May the joint forces encountered Dumouriez himself with a considerable army at Landskron.

The Poles lay along a ridge. The fortress itself covered the left flank, and the right and centre were protected by two woods. On the right the ridge was inaccessible, and along the front, in addition to the trees, the slopes were covered with brushwood, which formed a stiff, natural entanglement. The attack of the Russians was expected, the position was carefully chosen, and the fortress with its 30 guns was in itself a most formidable obstacle. But the overthrow of Dumouriez was instantaneous and complete. Suvorof took in the situation at a glance, and, without waiting for his infantry, launched the Cossacks of Tchuguyef and a squadron of carabineers straight at the enemy's centre. Dumouriez, to whom such a cavalry attack upon unbroken infantry appeared, not unnaturally, absurd, ordered his men to hold their fire until the Russians reached the crest of the ridge itself. This was sound, orthodox, military doctrine, and a steady infantry, by a couple of volleys at point blank range, even without artillery, would have emptied almost every saddle in front of them. But Suvorof knew Dumouriez's troops better than the French commander himself. As the Cossacks swept yelling up the slope, the Poles turned and ran. Dumouriez and a few other officers in vain tried to stop them, and Miutchiski actually led some of the infantry forward against the Russian foot. But the battle was decided in the first few minutes. The Polish left wing retired in good order into Landskron. But about 500 Poles were killed, two field-guns remained in Suvorof's hands, and the fortress itself was left alone merely because the victors had only 8 guns to bring against the 30 which

defended it. Dumouriez himself shook the dust of Poland from his feet, and went straight back to France.<sup>1</sup> Suvorof completed his brief campaign by defeating another detachment of Poles under Pulavski at Zamostye. He then returned to Lyublin. In 17 days he had marched about 475 miles, and fought 8 battles or skirmishes.

The defeat at Landskron left the Poles for a time



without a leader, and without even the nucleus of what could be called an army. But Count Oginski of Lithuania, who had hitherto held away from the insurgents, at length threw in his lot with them, and on the 30th August fell suddenly upon a Russian detachment under Colonel Albuitch and killed or captured the greater part of it at Rudka. Around him there

<sup>1</sup> Pyetrof, iii. 223. Dumouriez gives his own account of the Polish business in *La Vie et les Mémoires du Général Dumouriez*. Suvorof himself declared that Dryevitz behaved with "skill, manliness, and courage." Pyetrushevski, i. 104.

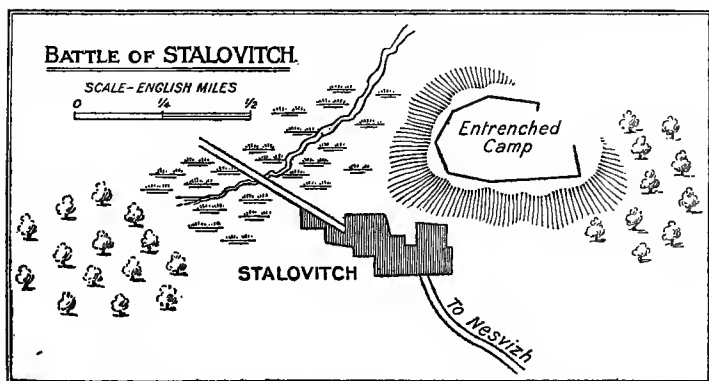
soon gathered a force of several thousand men, and the work of Landskron seemed all undone.

As early as the 23rd July Weimarn had warned Suvorof to watch the suspicious movements of Oginski. On the 21st September he sent him elaborate instructions how to act in co-operation with Dryevitz. Whether Suvorof received these instructions or not, is doubtful. At any rate, he learned of the defeat of Albuitch, and wrote on the 1st September to inform Weimarn that he was at once starting for Lyublin. On the 2nd he was at Kotsk, on the 5th at Vyala, and on the 6th at Brest. From there he marched to Byereza, and then to Nesvizh, where he at last got certain information of the whereabouts of Oginski. Bidding Colonel Diring and Lieutenant-Colonel Khvabulof, who were near at hand with small bodies of troops, to join him as soon as possible, he marched swiftly towards Stalovitch. He had with him 822 men, and Oginski's strength was about 5000. But the Poles had no news of Suvorof, and imagined that there were no Russians in their neighbourhood but a few small detachments like that of Diring. They were taken completely by surprise.

The village of Stalovitch lay in an open plain in front of a large marsh, across which ran a single causeway, 200 yards long. Suvorof, avoiding a frontal attack, marched during the night of the 9th round to the rear of the town. It was very dark, and for the last part of the march, the only guide was the light in the bell-tower of a neighbouring monastery. Aiming at the causeway, the Russians dashed across it as the startled enemy opened fire. The village was soon taken, and the Poles, leaving many prisoners and some of their cannon to the Russians, hid themselves in the houses, or fled out of the place. Only Oginski's Guard, his so-called "Janissaries," offered a steady resistance, and Oginski himself barely escaped capture. Some of Albuitch's men heard the shouts and the firing, leaped from the windows of the houses in which they

lay, and joined their comrades. The surprise so far had succeeded.

This, however, was only the first stage. A large part of the Polish force lay outside the town, and Oginski was able to collect them in some order in a trenched camp upon a neighbouring hill. Here he was attacked at daybreak by Suvorof. After a brief artillery preparation, the Russians broke in with horse and foot, and the Poles were soon put to flight. Many surrendered. A detachment of 1000 horse under General Byelak came up when the battle was finished, and was sent



flying after the rest. Oginski got away into Prussia with a handful of horsemen, and the second army of the Polish Republic, like the first, ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup>

Neither the desperate energy of the Poles nor the readiness of the French to make use of them was ended by this shattering defeat. In September 1771 the Baron de Vioménil arrived in Poland to reconstruct the army of the Republic. On the Russian side Von Weimarn was replaced by Alexander Ilyitch Bibikof, who had served in the Seven Years' War without being stereotyped in the form of a Prussian drill sergeant. The last official transactions between Weimarn and

<sup>1</sup> *Campagnes*, i. 49. Pyetrof, iii. 250.

Suvorof were of the bitterest kind. The retiring Commander-in-Chief rebuked the victor of Stalovitch for his presumption in marching against the enemy without express orders, and reported him to the Military College for giving inadequate information about his proceedings, the losses of both sides, the distribution of the booty, and so forth. Nothing came of this, and Suvorof, who had previously received the 1st Grade of the Order of St. Anne and the 3rd Class of the St. George, was presented in December 1771 with the Order of St. Alexander Nevski, which even Bibikof had not obtained.<sup>1</sup> With his new Commander-in-Chief Suvorof succeeded in keeping on better terms. A letter written to Bibikof in awkward French shows that the two were intimate.

An animal, I say, of our species, accustomed to troubles in spite of inevitable inconvenience, thinks himself dull when he is without any, and too long occasional rests lull him to sleep. How sweet to me are those wearinesses of the past! I looked for nothing but the good of my country, embodied in my duty as a servant of my august Empress, without doing special wrong to the people among whom I found myself, and even misfortunes, by whomsoever caused, gave me nothing but encouragement. Reputation is the lot of every honest man; but I have built this reputation on my country's glory, and its triumphs were only for her profit. Never did self-love, the most often aroused by wandering instinct, become master of my actions, and I forgot myself wherever there was room for patriotism. A wild education so far as social intercourse is concerned, but some innocent habits in my nature and a customary generosity made my labours easy; my feelings were free and I did not sink beneath them. God! could I soon but find myself in similar case! At present I languish in an idle life, fit for those mean spirits, which live only for themselves, which seek the crown of happiness in this lassitude, and from

<sup>1</sup> This correspondence between Von Weimarn and Suvorof and the reports to the Military College are in the *Moscow Archives of the General Staff*, quoted in Pyetrushevski, i. 120.



pleasure to pleasure hurry into bitterness. Misanthropy already casts a shade upon my brow, and I think I foresee in the result a greater suffering; an active soul should always be fed with the practice of its trade, and frequent exercise is as healthy for it as the ordinary exercises of the body.<sup>1</sup>

This letter was written on the 5th December 1771. Between the defeat of Oginski and the resumption of hostilities in the spring, Suvorof's energies were occupied in drilling his troops, and endeavouring to maintain discipline under exceptionally difficult circumstances. Polish hospitality was too much for some of his officers and Polish wealth for some of his men, and he was constantly making complaints about coffee parties in Polish country houses and indiscriminate plunder and robbery. He was also very keen in preventing harsh treatment of Polish prisoners and deserters: "Feed them well," he said, "even if you give them more than their due portion." "A generous reception of repentant rebels serves our interest better than the shedding of their blood." The Russians were in Poland to maintain "peace in Israel," not as foreign conquerors. As for spies, "the rebels have spies only to tell them where we are busying ourselves; they are so many, that when we hunt them out I examine them and let them go home."<sup>2</sup> But this sort of police war was not to his taste, and the affair at Cracow in 1772 finally disgusted him.

The campaign of 1772 was carried on differently from those of previous years. Bibikof decided to divide his troops into three armies; one to act in the field, and the other two to reduce, one after another, such strong places as remained in Polish hands. As there were no men to spare, the fortresses were to be taken by siege and not by storm. This would in any case have meant an indefinite prolongation of the war, and

<sup>1</sup> Bibikof, *Memoirs of General Bibikof*, 164.

<sup>2</sup> *Moscow Archives of the General Staff*; quoted in Pyetrushevski, i. 121.

unhappily the first place to be captured was the Russian stronghold of Cracow. The commandant was Colonel Stackelburg, Suworof's successor as head of the Suzdal regiment, a brave man, but destitute of all other soldierly qualities. As Suworof declared, he never drilled his troops. "Who could be found more worthy, more equitable, more wise than Stackelburg; only in frost, in rain, in wind, and in the heat he has the belly-ache." In addition to being lazy, Stackelburg was fond of the society of priests and women, and Suworof was particularly displeased with his facility in foreign languages.<sup>1</sup> Under his command the garrison of Cracow fell into a state of lethargy and invited surprise.

On the night of the 21st January the French officers in charge of the Polish levies at Tuintse made a daring attempt against Cracow. Lieutenant-Colonel Choisy was in command, and the enterprise was as successful as it was daring. Stackelburg was invited to a reception at the house of a Polish lady, who had previously complained that the cries of a particular sentry kept her awake at night. The obliging Stackelburg removed the sentry from his post, the exit of the main rubbish shoot of the citadel, and went off to the reception with a light heart. A small party crept in single file up the evil-smelling passage, took the garrison by surprise, and threw open the gates to the main body of the assailants.<sup>2</sup>

Suworof was furious at this disaster, which was due to sheer negligence on the part of the garrison. He marched from Lithuania upon Cracow. From there he sent a letter to Bibikof, denouncing Stackelburg in unsparing language.

Now I must inform your Excellency of the cause of the incredible happenings in the fortress. Count Stackelburg! First, he is one of the darlings of Ivan Ivanovitch Weimarn, corresponding with him in foreign

<sup>1</sup> *Moscow Archives of the General Staff*, 206, Bk. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Moscow Archives of the General Staff and Orders of the Military College*, 1773. Pyetrof, iv. 4; quoted in Pyetrushevski, 128 *et seq.*; *Journal de la Siège de Cracovie*.

languages, and therefore from the day of his taking over the regiment he never drew sword; secondly, here in a district where he has many acquaintances, priests and old women have utterly turned his head. Instead of being active in usefulness, he is merely a good-natured man, and has slept on the reputation of being that.<sup>1</sup>

He joined forces with General Branitski, and with rather more than 3000 men took such steps as were possible to recapture the citadel. Having no siege artillery, he mounted his field-guns on neighbouring houses, and battered the walls in preparation for an assault. This was a very desperate enterprise. The place was sufficiently strong to withstand the bombardment, and he could not afford to lose any of his few hundred men in attempts against unbreached walls. Twice he tried, by firing off cannons behind his lines and moving his men about in confusion, to entice the enemy from their stronghold into traps, but both attempts failed. Two mines were driven through the rocky soil. But Suvorof's was ever the bolder way, and, after one or two sallies had been driven back, he decided to storm the castle on the night of the 18th February, before the galleries were completed. While all his men were concentrated against the citadel, the protection of the rear was entrusted to parties of Jews, called out from the Ghetto and hastily armed.

Covered by artillery and musketry fire, the troops advanced against the main gate. The petard attached to the gate failed to shatter it, and a disorderly battle took place around and through the archway, both sides firing at short range, and the assailants climbing at some points into the embrasures from which the cannon were playing upon them. At last, after losing about 100 killed and 45 wounded, Suvorof drew off his men. For the time being there was nothing more to be done. But soon after this failure a messenger from the garrison was captured, and it appeared from the letters taken

<sup>1</sup> Bibikof.

upon him that the besieged were in want of food and medical stores. There was now no question of abandoning the blockade. But Suvorof recognised the futility of such proceedings, if it was desired to bring the war to a speedy end, and he wrote to Bibikof in plain terms.

So be it! Our unsuccessful storm appeared the extreme of boldness; but it showed at the time that the impossibility of it was aggravated by our incapacity for such operations. Without Vauban and Cohorn it would have been better for us to study a little in the Petersburg neighbourhood. Our timing was bad. But if we are to go in for single sieges, then there will never be a real end. While we take one fortress, they can fortify themselves in another; and while we are squandering our strength they will certainly get additions to theirs. We shan't take three fortresses in a year.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, there was nothing to be done but to go on with the blockade. Heavy guns were brought up in April, and substantial damage was at last done to the defences. The defenders were already shaken by their privations. So early as the 29th February Choisy wrote to Vioménil, "Dry bread, barley porridge and courage are the only food we have for officers and men."<sup>2</sup> The arrival of the siege-guns made further resistance impossible, and Choisy opened negotiations. On the 12th April it was agreed that the place should be surrendered on the 15th, the garrison to retain their private property, and the French not to be prisoners of war, entitled to be exchanged. On the 15th they marched out. Suvorof gave back the sword which Choisy offered to him, and embraced the defeated but not disgraced commander. About 700 prisoners were taken on this surrender.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bibikof, 179.

<sup>2</sup> Vioménil, *Lettres sur les Affaires de Pologne*.

<sup>3</sup> *Campagnes*, i. 60; Pyetrof, iv. 9; *Journal*. Some writers, e.g. Bibikof, say that Suvorof compelled the enemy to come out by way of the rubbish shoot through which they went in. This is untrue. In that case he would hardly have returned Choisy's sword, and he would certainly not have kissed him.

The recapture of Cracow was almost the last military event of the Polish war. A great part of the country was now in the possession of foreign troops. Austria, having long exhausted the possibilities of matrimony, had resorted in this case to more direct methods of aggrandisement. As early as the end of 1770 Austrian forces had occupied the Duchy of Tsips, in Galicia, at a time when the Austrian Government was actually giving shelter in other directions to armed parties of the Confederates. In 1772 she went still further, and by May about 40,000 of her soldiers were in movement towards Cracow. Not wishing to be anticipated, Prussia had disposed troops along and across the western frontier of Poland, and there were now some 20,000 of them actually on Polish soil. The three armies, united only in their intention of getting some part of the country for themselves, were an inconvenience to each other, and tact and good management were constantly required to prevent actual collisions between them. Suvorof seems at this time to have made a journey to Berlin, where he saw Frederick and complained to him of the conduct of the Prussian postmasters.<sup>1</sup> But this quasi-political work was even more detestable to him than inactivity, and he wrote at last to Bibikof, begging to be removed.

Give in to me, my dear sir. Such a home of philosophers as man never saw. Here I have been about four years, and often I think of running away . . . your fault . . . I have been rude, and they intrigue against me . . . They quarrel with me . . . I'm a good-natured man; I don't know how to say "no." Here I'm afraid of my neighbours the Jesuits, and all these D'Altoni. Forgive me . . . Please send some one else. Why the devil should I go on talking with them? <sup>2</sup>

With D'Alton, the Austrian Civilian Commissioner,

<sup>1</sup> This fact is stated in one of the Russian periodicals on German authority. I cannot give the exact reference.

<sup>2</sup> Bibikof.

he came into open conflict, and his embarrassments were ended by his own removal and a request from the Russian Government to the Austrian that D'Alton might be sent somewhere else. But the affairs of Poland had now got beyond his scope. Arms gave place to the toga, and the diplomatists completed the work which the soldiers had begun. The half-hearted attempts of the three conspiring Powers were replaced by open and barefaced villainy. The pretence of restoring order was abandoned, and it became simply a question of distributing plunder. As the actual hour for the crime approached, the motives of the three participators had become defined. Frederick, no doubt, knew his own intentions at an earlier stage than either of his associates. His Silesian experience pointed the way to further enterprises of the same sort, and such an accomplished appropriator of the territory of others saw further along the road to the Partition of Poland than those to whom this would be a first attempt in the kind. The actions of Russia and Austria had been hesitating, but the first years of the Turkish War gave each of them important, though different, reasons for inclining to the views of Prussia. Panin, Catherine's Foreign Minister, had been against partition, not because he sympathised with the Poles, but because he felt that Russia had already the preponderating influence in Poland, and that a united Poland under the thumb of Russia was better than a divided Poland of which two-thirds would be irrevocably lodged in the hands of competing Powers. But Russia had now incurred considerable losses in men and money during the Turkish War, and required some compensation. The Crimea would not be sufficient, and Moldavia and Wallachia, where her most striking victories had been won, could not be annexed without incurring the jealousy of Austria. Austria, on the other hand, had previously feared the strength of Turkey. But now that that strength had been proved to be a mere bubble, it was immaterial to Austria whether

Turkey continued to hold Moldavia and Wallachia or not, so long as they did not swell the formidable resources of Russia. An alternative must therefore be found for Russia in some other quarter, and nothing could have been more convenient for this purpose than the territory offered by the disorders and weaknesses of Poland.

The three Powers therefore came at last to an agreement, and jealousies and antagonisms, which might very well have involved them in an expensive and destructive war, were resolved by the beautiful expedient of an alliance for the plunder of another State. Each appropriated part of Poland, and the residue, with a new constitution, guaranteed by Russia, was left for a time in peace with the good-natured king Stanislav on the throne. The blessed word "compensation" was thus introduced into the vocabulary of Imperialist diplomacy, and the Partition of Poland illustrated with the completeness of perfect art the first principle of the modern science of Empire, that our own property is best protected by sharing in the forcible distribution of that of others. Two contending ambitions are by this means satisfied at the minimum of expense, and two great States, instead of wasting each other in an internecine struggle, combine in perfect harmony to enrich each other at the expense of a third, too weak to defend itself. In more recent times, the doctrine has been practised more frequently at the expense, and often even for the benefit of the inhabitants of uncivilised or barbarous countries. But the first pattern, the Partition of Poland, was done upon the living body of a European people of old civilisation and the greatest natural genius. Italians, Belgians, and Norwegians had afterwards good cause to regret its apparent success, and the world has since been at war to prove that it was in fact a failure.

Suvorof had left the Polish stage before the last scene of the tragedy was played out. He had had one more violent conflict with a colleague, this time with a

certain Colonel Renn. In August 1772 he wrote a characteristic letter to Bibikof.

With Renn our affairs go from bad to worse. He's a notorious, turbulent, debauched man, evil-minded, and to speak frankly, an appropriator of the goods of others. Here he has done nothing but be churlish, and except what I have said already, he has shown himself fit for nothing. His bulging pocket holds everything. His insults are beyond my patience; he sets an altogether vicious example for others.

But Renn made some amends, for at the end of the month Suvorof wrote again :

I have forgiven everything, if only Renn will henceforth refrain from his cunning lies.<sup>1</sup>

This was the last of his petty worries, and in October he was transferred to Finland.

Once away from the Polish tangle, he began to look back upon it with regret. A letter written to Bibikof on the 21st October, when he had arrived at Vilna, shows how little impression the discomforts had actually made upon him, and shows, too, that his own behaviour had given him good cause for satisfaction. He describes the letter as written "à l'Anglaise."<sup>2</sup>

I follow my destiny, which comes from my own country and draws me from a land where I have wanted to do nothing but good, and at least I have always tried to do it. My heart was never embarrassed by it, and my duty never raised an obstacle. Sincere in my acts, I took precautions only against moral evil, and physical evil died out of itself. My unrepentant virtue is well content with the satisfaction which they show towards my conduct; here they know me from the point of view of the good side of my reputation, since I only stayed here a short time, or at least because I feel I have not served this country well enough. Simple

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<sup>1</sup> *Moscow Archives of the General Staff*, quoted in Pyetrushevski, i. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently because of its frankness. Its incoherence is Suvorof's own.



acknowledgement awakes in me a love for this country, where they wish me nothing but good ; I leave it with regret.

But if I contemplate the D's, the R's, the Alts, the iniquitous ministers of my guiltlessness, I begin to breathe freely ; here I finish my career as a man of honour, I get rid of them, my feeble complaints aggravate my annoyance, greatest where I wished most to exceed my duty. I did not hate them, I could never despise them ; and what change could I expect in their tortuousness, knowing their qualities as I did ?

It is true, I did not enter too much into relations with women, but when I did regale myself with them respect was never absent. Time was too short for the practice of that sort of art, and I was afraid of them ; it is they who govern the country here as elsewhere ; I did not feel strong enough to defend myself against their charms.<sup>1</sup>

So ended the second stage of Suvorof's military career. The third followed almost at once. In April he was sent from Finland to the Russian headquarters at Jassy, where he was given a command in the Army of Wallachia under General Saltikof, son of the inglorious victor of Kunersdorf.

<sup>1</sup> Bibikof, 208. " D " is Dryevitz and " R," Renn.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FIRST TURKISH WAR

Turkish warfare—Victories of Rumyantsov—Suvorov captures Turtukai, 1773—Correspondence—Captures Turtukai again—Affair at Hirsof, 1773—Battle of Kozludzhi, 1774—Failure of the plan of campaign—Peace of Kutchuk-Kainardzhi—Suvorov marries unhappily—His freakish character.

THE war against the Turks, which began in 1769, was the first stage in the expulsion of that race from the Europe which they had so long desolated and profaned. At the beginning of it, the frontier between Russia and Turkey stretched from Kief on the Dnyepyr to the Sea of Azof. Between the two countries swept the vast and uninhabited steppe. The line of the Dnyestr had been fortified by the Turks at Khotin, Bendyeri, and Akkerman, with advanced fortresses at Otchakof and Kinburn, but the real defence of the country was the fertile but untilld desert which lay in front of it. Russia could only hope to attack it through Poland on the one side, and from the Black Sea on the other. A successful advance in either direction would turn the formidable natural obstacles, which could otherwise be overcome only by a superlatively well-organised system of commissariat and transport. Such a system had hitherto been far beyond the powers of the Russian State, and the campaigns of Minnich, earlier in the century, had broken down owing to the fearful losses inflicted by cold, hunger, and disease. Poland being already open to the passage of Russian troops, these had penetrated

deeply into Moldavia and Wallachia by the time that Suvorof joined them. This new theatre of war afforded him an admirable opportunity for the display of his genius.

The methods adopted generally by the Russians in this war showed a great advance on those of previous campaigns against the Turks. During the eighteenth century, however aggressive the policy and strategy of Russia in its dealings with the Asiatic peril, the tactics of its armies in the field had always been defensive. The soldiers were arranged in such a way as to testify to the terrible reputation of the Turkish hosts in attack. The main formation was the square of infantry, protected at the angles and along the flanks by artillery. Round the square were set the "chevaux de frise"; each section of which was carried into action by six men, and was attached by hooks and chains to those on each side of it. Within the square was the infantry reserve, ready to strengthen the sides at whatever point they gave way before the whirlwind rush of the Turkish cavalry. The light baggage train was also collected inside the square, while the heavy waggons were formed into a special lager at a safe distance from the battleground. The cavalry was regarded as so hopelessly inferior to the Turkish, that it was kept well in the rear, and only released when the enemy was thoroughly broken by the fire of the artillery and infantry. The whole scheme of this order of battle was thus defensive. The tactical initiative was surrendered to the Turks. Their artillery and infantry were despised, but all their enemies dreaded the ferocious, even if completely undisciplined attacks of their light horse. These were permitted to sweep down upon the squares in the hope that after one or more attempts their losses from artillery and musketry fire would reduce them to utter chaos. Even then it would be impossible for the square to move in pursuit. Only the cavalry could be expected to follow, and that with the utmost caution. Under

these circumstances a decisive victory over the Turks was obtained with great difficulty.<sup>1</sup> If driven back by the infantry, they dispersed and fled with such rapidity that an energetic pursuit could seldom be undertaken. A shattering blow against them could as a rule only be delivered when they could be shut in a fortress and besieged. A whole army might be destroyed by storm or capture. But a victory in the field, however much it redounded to the glory of those who took part in it, was seldom of decisive military importance. Against such an adversary, terrible in attack and feeble in defence, devoid of discipline, of calculation, and of endurance, as unresisting and headlong after a defeat in the field as he was reckless, cruel, and covetous before the battle was joined, the certain road to victory was that of resolute aggression. The subsequent military career of Suvorof and his whole theory of war were largely determined by his experience against the Turks, and his virtues and vices as a general both sprang from the same root. His methods were learned before he served in Turkey, but they were developed and confirmed in this fighting along the Danube. There he became convinced that the secret of success was to march swiftly and to attack boldly, and as he never failed when matched against a slow and irresolute enemy, so he was at last overthrown when he encountered one who marched as swiftly and as boldly as himself, and had at the same time the advantage of numbers and position.

Without doubt, there were good soldiers in the Turkish Wars before Suvorof, and he was not the only one who understood how they should be fought. It did not require his appearance to improve upon the old methods of dealing with this barbarous enemy. The need for

<sup>1</sup> It is curious to find a Byzantine writer advising the Emperor (*circa* 500 A.D.) to use exactly the same device for defending Constantinople against Scythia. See Oman, *The Art of War: The Middle Ages*, 23.

increased mobility, both in attack and in pursuit, was obvious, and Rumyantsov, the Russian Commander-in-Chief, had from the first set himself to abolish much of what was obsolete. The Turks had actually become much less formidable than in previous wars, and their generals were less energetic and their troops less stubborn than in the days when they were the terror of European civilisation. Their system remained the same, but the life had gone out of it, and the Turkish armies, though occasionally energetically and successfully led, were generally of poor quality. Rumyantsov had thus been able to win victories which resembled those of Clive in India. In 1770 at Larga, with 30,000 men, he had beaten more than 80,000 Tartars; and he followed up this exploit by defeating at Kagul, with only 17,000 men, an army of 180,000 Turks. Rumyantsov retained the square as the ordinary formation of the infantry, finding it, as the English found it a hundred years later in the Sudan, the best means of breaking a charge of fanatics, mounted or on foot. But he reduced its size, and though the "*chevaux de frise*" were actually used on some occasions in the next Turkish War, their use was almost entirely abandoned by Rumyantsov. Instead of massing all his troops into a single huge square, he divided them into several squares, with cavalry in the intervals. This plan had all the value of the old in defence, while it enabled the whole force to move with greater freedom against the enemy, and avoid the serious breaches in the formation which might arise from inequalities in the ground. At the same time one square could lend support to another as a solid mass, and at Kagul the broken troops of one unit were in fact saved in this way by throwing themselves into another which simultaneously moved towards them.

Rumyantsov had also increased the efficiency of his troops by improving their arms. To make the fire of the infantry more effective, he added to each battalion 50 *Jägers*, whose shorter and more manageable muskets

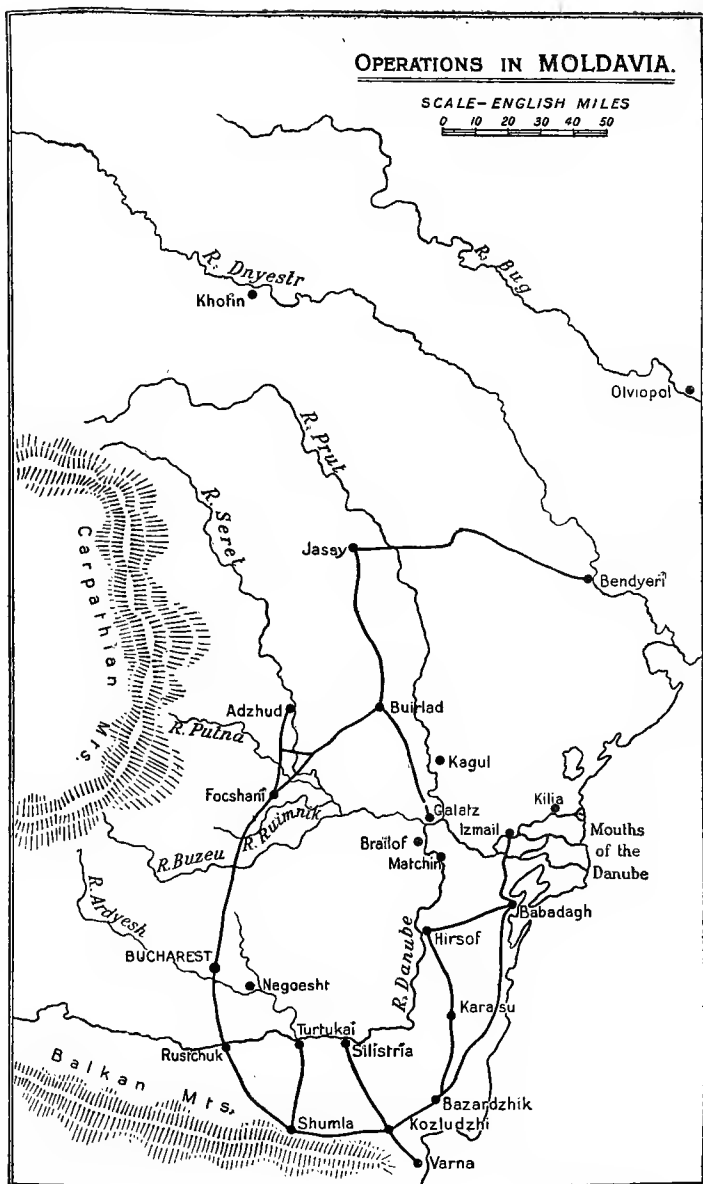
made them better marksmen than the ordinary grenadiers. The cavalry he found particularly incompetent, and as cavalry they were in fact useless against the Turks. They were armed in such a way as to make them mere infantry on horseback, incapable of charging the enemy. The cuirassiers, in addition to their breast- and back-plates, carried a sword and two pistols; the carabineers carried a sword, carbine, and bayonet, and two pistols; and the hussars a sabre, carbine, and two pistols. Rumyantsof turned the two last into cold steel cavalry, and made it impossible for them to waste time in firing by depriving them of their carbines and bayonets. They were thus compelled to rely upon their individual courage and the vigour of their attacks, instead of halting to fire off their carbines and being overwhelmed by the superior horsemanship of the Turks. With the artillery Rumyantsof did not interfere. It was immensely superior to the Turkish; and posted at the angles and on the flanks of the squares of infantry gave confidence to the Russians and inspired a wholesome terror in the ranks of their enemies.<sup>1</sup> Enough has been said of the reforms of Rumyantsof to show that he required in some respects little instruction from Suvorof. His tactical changes were exactly those that would have been made by Suvorof himself, and the latter only improved upon them to the extent of employing a number of small squares of equal size in

<sup>1</sup> Each regiment took into action two or more light guns, which could, if necessary, be carried on the shoulders of the men. The Russians had, in addition, field artillery, 6- or 9-pounders. See Pyetrof, ii. 4. On earlier methods against the Turks and the reforms of Rumyantsof, see Pyetrof, ii. 426; Bogdanovitch, 97; Pyetrushevski, i. 183; Valentini, 19. Baron de Tott, in his *Mémoires sur les Turcs et les Tartares* (Amsterdam, 1785), says that artillery (*sc.* field artillery) was unknown to the Turks until this war. He was a French officer, and was at the time engaged in organising the defences of Constantinople. His third volume contains an invaluable description of the Turks and his experiments in casting cannon and accustoming the barbarians to their use. He says (i. 128) that the gunners thought more of making a great noise than of hitting their object.

# OPERATIONS IN MOLDAVIA.

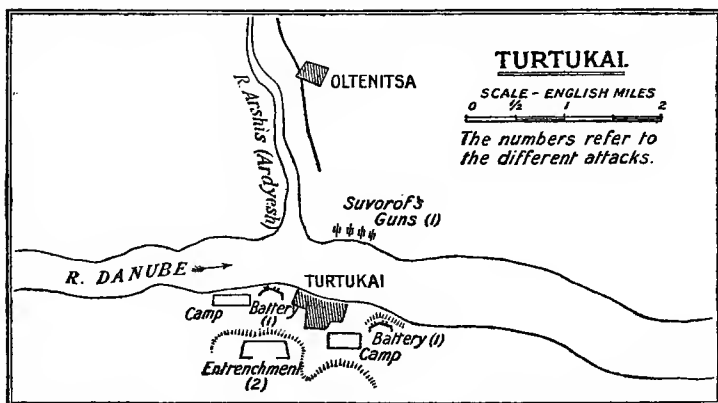
SCALE-ENGLISH MILES

0 10 20 30 40 50



two lines instead of one large square supported by other smaller squares. Nevertheless Suvorof, though he had little opportunity of making innovations, found in this Turkish War more than one occasion for displaying his characteristic energy.

His first exploit was his capture of Turtukai. This little town, situated on the southern bank of the Danube to the south-east of Bucharest, was one of the strong posts by which the Turks hoped to hold the line of the river at the beginning of 1778. Rummyantsof had driven the enemy out of Moldavia and Wallachia and had



occupied part of the Dobrudzha itself. But the badness of Russian roads is only less than that of Turkish. Transport was accordingly very slow, and supplies for a big campaign across the Danube were not to be obtained in the conquered territories. Rummyantsof, therefore, felt unable to carry out Catherine's vigorous scheme for pushing on to the Balkans, and confined himself to a series of isolated attempts against the Turkish system of defence. The enterprise against Turtukai was arranged by Saltikof, who threatened the fortress of Rushtshuk, 45 miles further up the river, with his main body, while he detailed Suvorof with the Astrakhan regiment of infantry, three squadrons of regular cavalry,



and a regiment of Cossacks, with seven guns, to capture Turtukai at all costs.

Opposite Turtukai, which lay on the slopes of the southern bank, under the protection of two entrenched camps and a battery of guns, the river Ardyesh flows into the Danube through the marshy flats of the northern bank. At the beginning of May Suvorof collected a fleet of 17 boats in the Ardyesh at Negoesh, some miles above its confluence with the Danube. Each boat held about 40 men, not counting the rowers, and as these last were also soldiers, it was possible to transport some 700 men at one passage. On the 8th he sent this miniature fleet down the river, ordering it to wait under shelter of the reeds at the mouth, near the village of Oltenitsa. Thither he marched with the remainder of his forces. In the meantime the enemy, believing that the Russian strength was concentrated in the feigned attack upon Rushtshuk, prepared to fall upon Suvorof at Negoesh. A force of 600 horse and 300 foot left Turtukai on the 8th, crossed the Danube, and at dawn on the 9th encountered some of Suvorof's Cossacks near the river. The Cossacks retired to Oltenitsa, where they were reinforced by both infantry and cavalry. The Turks were vigorously attacked, and fled in disorder to their boats. Not a few were drowned, 85 corpses were counted on the field of battle, and an indefinite number lay hidden in the reeds and long grass with which the place was covered. The Turkish commander, Bim Pasha, and eight others were taken prisoner, and it was ascertained from them that the garrison of Turtukai was about 4000 strong.

A less vigorous soldier might have been content with this success. But Suvorof, though his repeated demands for more infantry had been ignored by Saltikof, determined to carry out his original plan. At dusk on the 9th his flotilla, under command of Major Ryebok, pushed out from the mouth of the Ardyesh, and four guns, posted on the angle between the left bank of

that river and the Danube, opened a steady fire on the Turkish battery below Turtukai. To cause further perturbation to the enemy Suvorof caused his train of ox-waggons to be driven along the road towards the Danube, so that the huge cloud of dust might be taken to cover the approach of a formidable army. His cavalry were told to get across as best they could by swimming. The attack was completely successful. The Russians landed at two points, and only a few men were lost out of those who swam. Suvorof himself led a column against the camp below the town and was wounded in the right leg by a shell. Lieutenant-Colonel Maurinof with a second column took the Turkish battery with the bayonet. When the battery fell into the hands of Maurinof the capture of the camp became an easy task, and Major Ryebok was ordered to occupy the town itself. Ryebok carried out his orders, drove the Turks out of the camp and battery above the town, and entering the streets joined hands with the other Russian forces in the middle of it. The enemy offered little resistance, and none who awaited the Russians escaped alive. The bulk of them fled in all directions, leaving the victors in undisputed possession of the south bank of the Danube. The trophies were 6 standards, 16 guns and 50 ships and boats. The whole town was destroyed, and the Bulgar population, to the number of 663, carried over to the north bank. The Russian losses in the fighting on both banks were 88 killed and wounded, and Suvorof himself estimated those of the enemy at about 1500, or almost three times the numbers of all the Russian troops actually engaged.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately after the capture of Turtukai, Suvorof sent a characteristic report of the success to Saltikof. On a scrap of paper three inches square, he wrote: "Your Excellency! We have won. Glory to God,

<sup>1</sup> Pyetrof, iii. 29 *et seq.*; Pyetrushevski, i. 148 *et seq.* Before the destruction of the town, Suvorof allowed four men from each section to pillage for themselves and their comrades; *Campagnes*, i. 83.

glory to you." To Rumyantsof he sent a second note, consisting of a doggerel distich :

Glory to God, glory to you,  
Turtukai's taken, and I'm there too.<sup>1</sup>

These very unusual despatches were followed by some still more extraordinary letters to Saltikof. The day after the battle Suvorof wrote to his superior, who was also his personal friend, in the tone of a schoolboy, and dragged in some schoolboy Latin :

Yesterday we did in truth *veni, vedi, vici* ; and I was top boy. I have served your Excellency before, I'm a clumsy fellow. Only, daddy, do give me the second class quickly.<sup>2</sup>

Two days later came a more sober, but still not too dignified letter :

Don't omit, your Excellency, my dear comrades, and for God's sake don't forget me. I think I have really deserved the Second Class of St. George ; however warmly disposed I may be to myself, still I do think so myself. My chest and my bruised side give me much pain, and my head seems all swollen up ; forgive me ; let me go to Bucharest for a day or two to cure myself at the baths.

The next day he wrote again to congratulate Saltikof on his promotion to the rank of General-in-Chief, and added :

I trust that your kindness to me will not change henceforth. Be as much beloved by your soldiers as your father was.<sup>3</sup>

Suvorof was a great man. But he had the weakness of many other great men, a craving for acknowledgement

<sup>1</sup> The message to Saltikof is printed in Pyetrof, p. 38 ; that to Rumyantsof in *Campaignes*, i. 84.

<sup>2</sup> He referred to the 2nd Class Cross of St. George.

<sup>3</sup> These letters are quoted by Pyetrushevski, p. 154. They are in the *Archives of Military Education* at Petrograd.

and applause, and his requests were sometimes couched in almost grovelling language.

Unfortunately, his success at Turtukai was not followed by any general activity on the part of Saltikof. Only some vigorous attacks by Major-General Weissman enlivened the general dulness of the Russian front, and when Weissman was unfortunately killed in the hour of victory at Kutchuk-Kainardzhi on the 23rd June, Suvorof was the only leader of real competence left under Rumyantsof's command. This failure to make a general aggressive movement as usual spoiled Suvorof's temper, and his private correspondence with Saltikof must have given even that dull man many hours of uneasiness. The sight of the Turkish troops occupying the ruins of Turtukai and reconstructing their lagers and batteries was aggravated by an attack of recurrent fever, which, in Suvorof's case, rose and fell every 48 hours. Some allowance must be made for the effect of this upon his spirits, but his letters were nevertheless remarkably impatient and inconsistent with each other, and must have been infinitely exasperating to Saltikof. On the 29th May he wrote begging to be allowed to attack Turtukai. On the 4th June he asked in two separate letters for leave to go to Bucharest to get cured. On the 5th he received orders from Rumyantsof to attack Turtukai, and promptly wrote to inform Saltikof of his intention to remain at his post. On the 7th he again asked for leave, but that very night, having received some reinforcements, directed Prince Myeshtsherski to make a dash across the river against the enemy. The prince found the Turks on the alert, and abandoned his attempt, whereupon on the 8th Suvorof, not asking again for leave, actually went to Bucharest. From there he wrote to Saltikof. The letter of the 8th hinted at the faults of others. In that of the 9th he wrote more clearly :

Be so good as to judge whether I can resume the command of such miserable cowards, and if it would

not be better for me to pick up work when and where I can than to inflict the shame of this pettifogging barrack-square soldiery upon me ; to see under me people breaking their oaths and violating all their military duty ? G. B. is the cause of everything ; all lost heart. Can such a man be a colonel in the Russian army ? Wouldn't a paper general, even a senator, be better ? What a shame it is ! All lost heart. For God's sake, your Excellency, burn this letter. Again I remind you that I don't want him for an enemy, and I would abandon everything rather than have him. My penal servitude in Poland, due to my frankness, everybody knows. There is still a way out ; be good enough, as soon as possible, to send our young men a Major-General. All here are younger than I ; he can be my shadow ; I will give him the arrangements ; order him only to attack boldly. Then recall G. B. on some pretext or other, and then for the time being send a couple of bold and manly infantry staff officers. . . . God help me, when I think of this meanness of spirit, my bones turn to water.

On the 10th he wrote asking for another battalion :

Prince Myeshtsherski is an honest man, but not accustomed to command ; nor is Bat, and he is a coward to boot.

On the 11th came another letter, and on the 14th he returned to Negroesht and wrote that he was again in good health and would make the attempt against Turtukai.<sup>1</sup>

The infantry battalion arrived, and Suvorof also dismounted some of his carabineers, and began training them as infantry. The second assault on Turtukai took place on the night of the 16th June, and was as successful as the first. On this occasion Suvorof commanded 4100 men, and about 3200 were used in the actual attack. The Turks were again estimated at about 4000.

<sup>1</sup> *College of Military Instruction*, No. 509 ; quoted in Pyetrushevski, at p. 157. The "G. B." and "Bat" of these letters are Colonel Baturin, who commanded the column which Suvorof led in person on the first occasion.

The crossing was made in three lines of boats. Ryebok led the first, with two companies of the Astrakhan regiment and 60 picked marksmen. Baturin, accompanied by Suvorof in person, was in command of the second, and Myeshtsherski of the third. About three hours before nightfall the landing was accomplished, and the enemy were at once driven out of their lager up into a rectangular entrenchment on the crest of the hill. There Ryebok attacked them with his usual gallantry, plunged into the ditch, scrambled over the parapet, and drove a force of four times his own strength headlong out of the place. Nevertheless, a counter-attack was made with great stubbornness, and for three hours the combat raged in and around the entrenchment. Baturin again failed to give adequate support, but his detachment at length took up a position on Ryebok's left on the higher ground round the enemy's right flank. The steady fire of the artillery at last wore down the enemy, and a bayonet charge cleared the entrenchment. The Turks took refuge in their other lager, on the bank of the river above the ruins of the town. Suvorof summoned the remainder of his troops from the other bank and prepared for an attack upon their new position. But the enemy disputed the landing and at the same time surrounded and attacked the entrenchment from all sides. This final rally gave little trouble. The fresh troops landed on the right bank, brushed aside the Turks who stood in their way, and marched against the rear of the main body, as Suvorof left the entrenchment and attacked it in front. The enemy broke and fled once more into the lager, but without waiting for Suvorof's attack, evacuated it and hurried off towards Rushtshuk, pursued by the Russian cavalry. They left a Pasha and 800 other dead on the field, and the Russians carried off 9 guns and 35 boats. The losses of the victors, even after such a stubborn contest, were only 6 killed and 96 wounded.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Campaigns*, i. ; Pyetrof, iii. 90.

No more came of the second occupation of Turtukai than of the first, and the death of Weissman, on the 23rd June, seemed to paralyse the Russian armies. Suvorof went on training his troops and fitting out his river squadrons, and, as usual, complaining of his subordinates :

The Anzheron squad of recruits, under Major Tyeglef, has 50 sick out of 150—perhaps he has gone to Bucharest after the girls.

Of two staff officers he wrote :

One is clumsy, a meddler ; the other hardly out of his cradle.

Baturin had gone to Bucharest without leave, and so on. What is peculiar about these complaints, which were so constant with Suvorof, and so violent, is that they are all contained in private letters, and are very seldom expressed in any official report. Either Suvorof felt himself too fresh in the command of troops to make enemies among his subordinate officers, or he was reluctant to spoil the career of any person in his power. As he never showed fear of his equals, the first explanation is hardly likely to be correct. He certainly disliked spoiling the fortunes of inferiors, and probably shrank from using his authority for the professional destruction of men like Baturin, even while he could not keep his feelings out of his private correspondence. When honours and rewards were distributed in 1773, Suvorof got the 2nd Class of the Order of St. George, while both Baturin and Ryebok received the 4th Class, the former for his dubious services in the first action, and the latter for his unquestionable gallantry in the second.

So far as Suvorof himself was concerned, Rumyantsof was not slow to give honour where honour was due. On the 7th July he was transferred from Saltikof's army to that of Potyomkin, operating lower down the Danube. But his journey from Negoeshst was interrupted by an accident which might have killed him. Unsteadied by

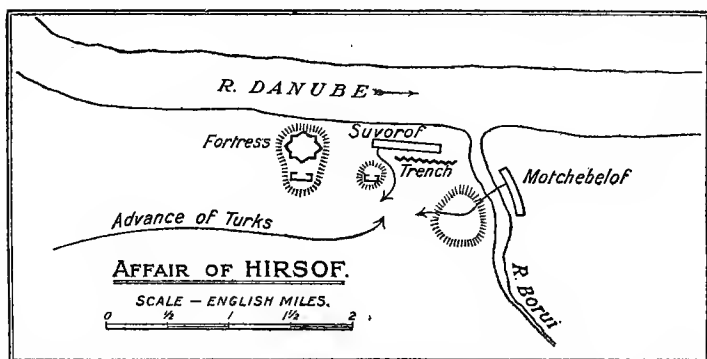
fever and his wound, he slipped and fell down the stairs of the monastery at Negoesh, and he lay in bed at Bucharest for two weeks. When he was able to take up his new command, he was sent by Rummyantsof to Hirsof, a fortress on the Turkish side of the Danube, about half-way between Matchin and Silistria. The nearest Turkish army lay at Karasu, some miles to the south-east, and Suworof at once proposed to make an attack upon it in conjunction with Lieutenant-General Ungern, who commanded the Russian troops immediately to the north of Hirsof. Unfortunately Rummyantsof, whose boldness in the field was spoilt by the timidity of his strategy, disapproved of the plan, and it was abandoned. Suworof had to content himself, or rather discontent himself with improving the defences of the post and waiting for the inevitable advance of the enemy. He also summoned to his assistance Major-General Miloradovitch with his brigade.

On the night of the 3rd September the Russian scouts found some 3000 Turkish cavalry encamped about 13 miles away on the road to Karasu. At 7 o'clock in the next morning 6000 cavalry, followed at a short distance by about 4000 infantry, encountered the Russian outposts and drove them back upon Hirsof. By mid-day the enemy were within cannon-shot.

Suworof drew up his forces parallel with the Danube to the north of the fortress. This stood upon an eminence running from the river bank at right angles to the direction of its current. At the end of this ridge furthest from the water was a strong redoubt. About a mile to the north stood another low hill a mile distant from the Danube. On this was placed a second and smaller redoubt. These two hills were included in the Russian system of defence. Further still to the north was a third hill, outside the Russian lines, with its northern slopes falling into the river Borui, which here runs at a right angle into the Danube. Suworof's own men were nearest the fortress itself, and were separated



from those of Miloradovitch by the small stream of the Borui. At the confluence of the two rivers was a trench-work protected by pits and "chevaux de frise," and here Suvorof took up his own station. The general scheme was such that the enemy, to attack the troops in the field, must expose their left flank to the fire of the fortress and the two redoubts. If they succeeded in getting into line in front of Suvorof, the first redoubt would still gall their left, while Suvorof's line would have the second redoubt and the trenches in front of it. The troops of Miloradovitch, who was ill, were commanded by Colonel Prince Motchebelof, and covered



by the Borui, could come into action when and at whatever point their intervention would be most effective.

The Russian skirmishers withdrew in feigned disorder. The Turks were allowed to pass the two redoubts without a shot being fired, and, showing signs of French training, formed in three lines opposite Suvorof. But when they surrounded the trench-work they were greeted with a brisk fire of musketry and fell away in disorder. Motchebelof then led one regiment across the Borui and attacked their right, and two other squares simultaneously moved out between the small redoubt and the trench-work, and supported by all the available guns, attacked their centre and left. For a time the

troops climbing up from the Borui were held back, but reinforcements came up, and the Turks were driven over the top of the hill which lay opposite the trench-work. The reinforcements worked round the rear of the enemy, and the field artillery, dragged up and posted on the hill itself, completed the overthrow of their right wing. A desperate attempt by some of the Turkish horse to take Motchebelof himself in the rear was frustrated by the fire of the troops remaining on the right bank of the Borui, and the enemy fled with their usual precipitancy, the centre and left making no attempt to hold up the tottering right wing. The Russian hussars chased them for twenty miles, and the Cossacks only gave up the pursuit long after nightfall. Over 1000 Turks were killed, and 6 guns and a mortar were taken. The Russian losses were 10 killed and 167 wounded.<sup>1</sup>

The campaign of 1774 gave Suvorof his last victory in this Turkish War. Rummyantsof at last determined to undertake a general offensive, cross the Danube, and penetrate as far as possible into Turkish territory. The line of the river was already broken in more than one place. The fortresses of Izmail and Brailof on the left bank had been in the hands of the Russians since 1771, and the northern Dobrudzha had in consequence been occupied by them as far south as Hirsof. If a further advance was to be made, Silistria, at any rate, must be captured, and Rummyantsof also aimed at taking Rushtshuk. These strong places secured, the way would be open to Shumla and Varna, beyond which and over the chain of the Balkans lay the road to Adrianople and Constantinople. The first stage of the plan was to be carried out in three movements. Saltikof, with 10,000 men, was to take Rushtshuk, and Rummyantsof himself, with 12,000, Silistria; while Kamyenski and Suvorof, with 14,000, were to advance through Bazardzhik upon Shumla, where the Grand

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, i. 95; *Pyetrof*, iii. 92.

Vizier, Mukhzin Sadi Mehemet, lay with the main Turkish army.<sup>1</sup>

The plan as a whole failed miserably, largely owing to deficient transport and the consequent want of supplies.<sup>2</sup> Neither Rushtshuk nor Silistria fell, and no general advance took place. The third movement was a partial success and remained incomplete only because of the failures elsewhere. Kamyenski, with 8000 men, marched south from Izmail, to meet Suvorof, crossing the Danube at Hirsof with 6000, at Babadagh. The enterprise began inauspiciously. Suvorof, resenting his subordination to a man only slightly his senior in rank, and very much his inferior in capacity, disregarded the arrangements for the junction, and after a strong rebuke from Kamyenski, met him at Bazardzhik instead of Babadagh. Loyalty to a colleague, who was also a rival, was not one of his virtues, and in this case he risked the defeat of an army. From Babadagh, on the 20th June, Suvorof having been on the march since 1 o'clock in the morning, they moved in company towards Kozludzhi.

The very day when the Russians left Bazardzhik, the Grand Vizier arrived with 40,000 men at Kozludzhi, on the march from Shumla to Hirsof. On the 22nd the light troops of the two armies encountered each other in the middle of a dense wood, which lay between the advancing Russians and Kozludzhi. The Russians had the worst of the combat. Their cavalry were driven back by a mixed force of cavalry and infantry, and three battalions, coming up to help them, were unable to stem the advance of the enemy. In the midst of the trees, through which there ran nothing but a single track, the numbers and impetuosity of the Turks gave them an immense advantage, and it was only at the very edge of the wood that the Russian infantry, further reinforced, and able at last to form square, succeeded in breaking the attack by musketry

<sup>1</sup> Pyetrof, iv. 32.

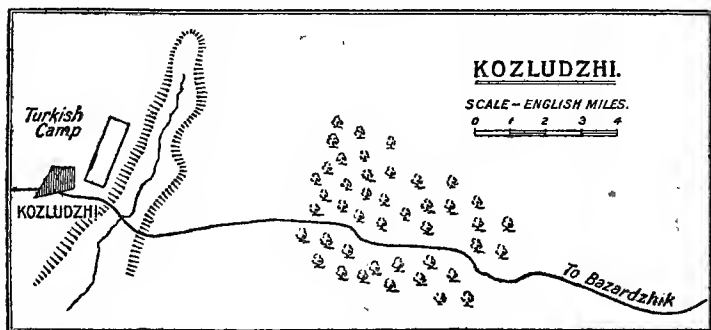
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 33.

and artillery fire. Suvorof himself was in command of the Russian vanguard, and at one moment only the speed of his horse saved him from the sabre of a furious Janissary.

Their advance stopped in this way, the Turks hurried back through the wood, and Suvorof, taking great risks, plunged into the trees after them. He invited defeat. To advance with weary troops through a dense forest, along a single road, and that a very bad one, was the height of folly. In such a place order and discipline could be of little service against an enemy whose capacity for fierce attacks upon broken formations was notorious. No doubt there would be little to fear from the Turkish cavalry in the wood itself. But the Russians, struggling out into the open after an exhausting march, ought to have been cut down to a man. The commander who would take such risks must be either a fool or a genius ; and even a genius could hardly have escaped disaster if his adversary had not been himself a fool. Suvorof thought he knew his Turk, and the event showed that he was right. Nevertheless the victory of Kozludzhi is one of those which geniuses need not, and ordinary men must not, try to imitate. Along the winding and broken track, littered with the dead bodies of men, horses, and oxen,<sup>1</sup> and here and there blocked by a waggon or intersected by a trench, the Russians struggled for some hours. The pace was thoroughly Suvorovian. Suvorof's men had not fed that day, nor had the horses been watered, and many men and animals died of sheer exhaustion. The enemy soon found that the Russian, entangled among the trees and undergrowth, was not, after all, as terrible as he had appeared on the edge of the wood, and the fighting was almost constant. Nevertheless, after four miles of this scrambling battle, Suvorof got his men out into the open. On the ridge

<sup>1</sup> The draught animals, which seem to have been in great numbers, had probably fallen from exhaustion. Routed Turks always ride and drive their animals to death.

before them was drawn up the whole Turkish army, and they were greeted with a heavy fire from the enemy's artillery, which was on this occasion unusually strong. Fortunately a heavy shower of rain fell, spoilt many of the Turkish cartridges, and at the same time soaked the long and cumbrous garments which most of the Turks wore. The dreaded whirlwind charge was delayed, and Suvorof had time to draw up his troops in two lines of five squares, with the cavalry on the flanks. He had about 5000 men on the spot, and some 2000 Arnauts were still engaged in clearing the wood of Turks. The rest of the Russian army was out of reach,



and all Suvorof's own field artillery seemed hopelessly bogged among the trees.

No sooner had he got his men into order of battle than he led them against the enemy. The Turks advanced to meet them. Several charges were driven off, and the Russians moved steadily forward, keeping up a close fire from muskets and the regimental artillery. The Turkish lager on the crest of the ridge, four miles away, was at last reached, and halting his troops on the edge of the gully which lay in front of it, Suvorof succeeded in bringing up a few of his field guns and poured a heavy fire into the camp. The Turks were soon in hopeless confusion. A few returned the Russian fire. But for the most part they were cutting the gun

traces and riding away on the horses, carrying off their private property, shooting their own officers, and thinking of nothing but escape. Into this crowd of discomfited ruffians the Russian shot fell without ceasing, and a stream of fugitives overflowed the further wall of the lager and poured away in the direction of Shumla. At sunset the whole place was in the hands of Suvorof, with 29 cannon, 107 flags, and the great bulk of the tents, waggons, and stores.<sup>1</sup>

It was the fate of Suvorof's Turkish victories to be barren of fruit. On this occasion nothing stood between the victors of Kozludzhi and Shumla but the miserable remnant of the Grand Vizier's army, not more than 1000 strong. Nevertheless the advance was not pressed, and the Russians stayed at Kozludzhi for six days. This was the decision of a council of war at which Suvorof was present. The only argument in favour of delay was the exhaustion of the troops, and even Suvorof himself, who had been on horseback for some twenty hours, must have needed rest. But a halt of six days was sheer waste of time and opportunity, and Rumyantsov himself wrote to Kamyenski:

Not days nor hours, but even moments are valuable in such a situation; want of provisions cannot serve you as an excuse.<sup>2</sup>

It is safe to assume that Suvorof was not in favour of so long a halt, unless, indeed, he was so ill and fatigued that he felt himself incapable of pushing on. It is certain that the bad feeling between him and Kamyenski never ceased from this date, and that a few days after the battle he went again to Bucharest "for reasons of health."

Nevertheless the victory at Kozludzhi, in the military sense incomplete, was a very powerful political argument, and the Turks abandoned all hope of bringing

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, i. ; Pyetrof, iv. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of Military Instruction*, quoted in Pyetrushevski, i. 180.

the war to a successful end. On the 10th July a treaty of peace was signed at Kutchuk-Kainardzhi. Turkey acknowledged the independence of the Crimea, a diplomatic fiction which meant that she left the Crimea to Russia, to be appropriated formally whenever Russia pleased; and she literally conceded Kinburn, Azof, Kertch, and Enikale, with the free right of navigation on the Black Sea. Turkey also agreed to pay an indemnity of 4,500,000 roubles.

After the conclusion of his Turkish campaign Suvorof married. It is not clear why he should have taken this step so late in life. Apparently he had never before shown any desire for marriage, and he had not found any difficulties in celibacy. His worst enemies never accused him of sexual irregularities, and though he was always fond of feminine society, it was most probably because it flattered him, and not because it satisfied any other want. His military career had absorbed all his energy, and he had poured all his emotional force into a habit of life as absorbing as that of a religious devotee, without any of the perilous inactivity of a mere life of meditation. To such a nature and in such circumstances celibacy must have been easy. Nevertheless he decided to change his state. It may be that his father, who was then 68, and died in the following year, pressed him to marry and continue the family name. It may be that at the age of 43 he was himself occasionally conscious of loneliness. Whatever his motives for the change, he made a bad choice. The bride was Varvara, daughter of Prince Ivan Prozorovski, whom he met at Moscow in 1773, either when he was on his way to Turkey, or when he returned on leave after the battle at Hirsof. She was poor, but of good family, beautiful, lively, and 20 years younger than himself, the last woman to live happily with such a man. An acquaintance has described her as "a beauty in the Russian sense; ruddy and buxom, with a mind of no high order and

an old-fashioned education.”<sup>1</sup> “Fat and stupid” is the description of another.<sup>2</sup> For a man who cared nothing for beauty, and was unusually intolerant of slowness of mind, such a mate was beyond hope unfit.

Very little record of the affairs of the joint household has come down to us. For some time there was no formal parting. The two lived together whenever Suvorof's duties permitted it, and the pleasure-loving wife must have been terribly dull in some of the little provincial towns. There were two children: Natalya, born on the 12th August 1775, and Arkadii, born on the 15th August 1784. But in September 1779 a formal separation took place. This was patched up in the following January, but after other quarrels and reconciliations a final separation was arranged early in 1784. Varvara Ivanovna went to live in Moscow on an allowance of 1200 roubles a year, which was afterwards increased to 3000.

Suvorof's marriage must therefore be added to the list of the failures of great men in matrimony. Doubtless his wife was of less worth than himself, but if he had been wise, he would not have chosen an inferior. Not only was she an unfit companion for him, but he was also an unfit companion for her, and her side of the story, if it could be known, would probably be as pathetic as blameworthy. Nothing of the correspondence between the two has been preserved. He accused her of infidelity, and apparently with reason. Her case is not on record. No doubt she could plead many neglects on his part, but precisely how many dull and lonely hours she spent, while he was engrossed in his master passion, cannot be told. The subordination of her claims upon his society to those of his soldiers repelled her, as her frivolity and want of appreciation

<sup>1</sup> “Anecdotes of Vigel” (Zapiski Vigela) in the *Russkii Vyesnik* (1864), 298. See also Shubinskii's “Wife of Suvorof” (Zhena Suvorova) in the *Istoricheskii Vyesnik* (1877), 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Istoricheskii Vyesnik* (1900), lxxx. 530.



repelled him. Such men commit a kind of spiritual adultery with their public work, hardly less painful in its consequences to their wives than the other adultery of which they are never guilty. That Suvorof was not wholly lacking in the domestic virtues is clear from the many proofs of his affection for his daughter. But daughters are not such tests of character as wives. They are never upon terms of equality. They require fewer concessions, fewer abdications, renunciations, and abstentions, and fewer positive acts of affection. Suvorof never worked easily upon terms of equality with any one, and besides being absorbed in the study and practice of the art of war, he was always an imperious and quick-tempered man. This combination of neglect and egoism would have been fatal to a marriage with any but an exceptional woman. To the misfortune of both Varvara Ivanovna and himself, she was not above the average, even if she was not below it.

Of his children he saw little. The boy lived with his mother till he was eleven years old. The daughter was taken away from her at the age of three, and placed in the Smolnii Institute at Petersburg, an establishment recently founded for the education of daughters of the nobility. She was a good-natured and benevolent little person.<sup>1</sup> With both, their father carried on an intermittent correspondence, which, in the case of Natalya, consisted of long and very affectionate letters. But of personal intercourse there was almost nothing, and scandal declared that Suvorof at first refused to acknowledge Arkadii as his own son.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, he took a serious view of his responsibilities, and his correspondence shows him as not only an affectionate but also a wise father.

This want of family life had no doubt something to do with the fantastic aspect of his character which in the remainder of his life became so conspicuous. Celibacy

<sup>1</sup> *Istoricheski Vvestnik* (1900), lxxx. 529.

<sup>2</sup> Masson, *Mémoires secrets sur la Russie*, i. 318.

tends to exaggerate abnormalities, in part directly, through the frustration of the sex impulse, and in part indirectly, through the mere absence of objects of affection and consideration. Doubtless, Suvorof would in any case have developed into a testy old man, very fond of mischief and requiring very careful management by his women folk. But he could hardly have risen to the heights of wilful and deliberate perversity of which so many examples have been recorded, had he not lived for most of his time without a wife. Absence of family, and especially of feminine influence is certainly responsible for the excessive development of this part of his nature.

Some of his biographers have puzzled themselves with this freakishness, and gravely explain it as a deliberate pose, assumed to attract the attention of his superiors, and get promotion more rapidly than a more ordinary person could expect.<sup>1</sup> This is a rational, but a too rational explanation. Suvorof was not the first great man to be eccentric, and in his case, as in others, it is not necessary to go deeper than high animal spirits and a liking for mischief. He had all the Russian instinct for clowning, for exuberant gesture and grimace, which is apparent in so many of the national dances. This he indulged to the full, both in getting on to good terms with his men and in expressing his contempt for the petty social idolatries of his day. A man who keeps a clear view of things in their true proportions cannot avoid the temptation to shock the feelings of those who strain at the gnats of the great realities, and swallow the camels of social convention and the etiquette of Courts. Suvorof's escapades were often of this kind, and persisted and were exaggerated long after the favour of Princes had ceased to have anything

<sup>1</sup> See, *e.g.*, Schmidt, i. 135; Laverne, 106 *n.* As an historian Schmidt had other Teutonic qualities besides his accuracy. An unconquerable seriousness is one of them. Laverne, as a Frenchman, should have known better.

more to give him. He was no doubt clumsy among courtiers, and to some extent may have used his eccentricity as a cloak. But he was big enough to transcend the rules of conventional good manners, and more often than not it is safe to assume that he said or did something outrageous for the sheer pleasure of throwing into confusion some pompous or pedantic egoist, who had converted social trifles from conveniences into matters of religion. Though he occasionally used the language of flunkeyism for his own advancement, he was never a flunkey at heart, and he delighted in shocking people who were. | Those will best understand this side of Suvorof's character who most appreciate the mixture of high seriousness and impish malevolence which makes up the genius of Mr. George Bernard Shaw. That it was in later life not always displayed with wisdom or good effect may be partly attributed to his disappointment in marriage. But it was a natural and not an assumed eccentricity, and he enjoyed indulging it for its own sake, and not for what he hoped to get by it.

## CHAPTER IV

### FRONTIER WORK

Rebellion of Pugatchyof, 1772—Intervention of Suvorof, 1774—Across the Volga—Capture of Pugatchyof—Suvorof's little ways—Potyomkin—Correspondence—The Tartars—Revolt in the Crimea, 1777—Squabbles with Prozorovski—Suvorof in charge—Migration of the Christians—Astrakhan and the road to India—Grievances—The Tartars again—Feasts and fights—Correspondence—Command of Petersburg Division, 1785—The Imperial Progress, 1787—Suvorof one of the sights.

By the end of the Turkish War Suvorof had acquired a great professional reputation, and even before Rumyantsof was ready to release him, his services were required in another quarter. Early in 1772 the ordinary turbulence of the inhabitants of the lands beyond the Volga developed into a dangerous rebellion. This border country between European civilisation and Asiatic barbarism was a perpetual menace to the stability of Russia, and its savage anarchy was held back by a hardly less savage system of police. At this time the whole social organisation, already strained by the Polish and Turkish Wars, seemed about to collapse. A Cossack named Emilian Pugatchyof, representing himself to be the late Emperor Peter III., put himself at the head of the rising, and for months the inhabitants of eastern Russia, almost as far as the walls of Moscow, suffered countless barbarities at the hands of parties of Kirghiz, Kalmucks, Tartars, Cossacks, and Russian criminals. It was not until the end of 1773 that Suvorof's old chief, Bibikof, arrived at Kazan and began to

co-ordinate the measures of defence. But in April of the next year Bibikof died, and Pugatchyof, more dangerous than ever, succeeded in burning the town of Kazan itself. The conclusion of peace with Poland and Turkey left Catherine free to deal with this ferocious system of slaughter and pillage. In July 1774 Count Peter Panin took charge of the operations, and Colonel Mikhelson drove Pugatchyof across the Volga, and began to beat him from one point of vantage to another.

Suvorof's appointment had been made in March, but Rumyantsof would not let him go until peace had been concluded. It was therefore not until the 24th August that, after a brief visit to his newly wedded wife at Moscow, he reached Ulokhovo and had an interview with Panin. The same day he started, with 50 men, for Penza and Saratof. He marched with his usual haste, leaving alone the scattered bands of marauders and the parties of landowners and their armed servants whom he met on the road. He aimed only at Pugatchyof himself. At Saratof he learned that Mikhelson had inflicted another heavy blow on the rebel leader. Adding a few more to his little party of soldiers, he hurried on to Tsaritsin, where he found that Pugatchyof had left four days before, and had plunged into the barren wastes on the eastern bank of the Volga. With two squadrons of cavalry and two of Cossacks, and 300 infantry mounted on horses taken by Mikhelson from the bandits, Suvorof went after him. In these regions there was no food or fuel to be got, and he drove 50 oxen before him to supply the place of the ordinary soldier's bread. The sun by day and the stars by night were the only guides, and news was picked up from the rare inhabitants and the armed parties which had started from other points in pursuit of Pugatchyof. At last, at the village of Malo Uzenye, Suvorof heard that the bandit had been seized by his own followers and taken to Yaitsk. Pushing on to that place with more haste than ever, he found, to

his bitter disappointment, that the captive had been handed over to Colonel Simyonof, who commanded the garrison of the post. In the last nine days Suvorof had covered 400 miles.

At Yaitsk he took charge of Pugatchyof and his twelve-year-old son. The boy was put in a cart, the father in a big wooden cage on wheels, and Suvorof made for Simbirsk with an escort of three companies of infantry, 200 Cossacks, and two cannon, with great torches blazing all night around the cage to prevent a surprise and a rescue. At Simbirsk, on the 12th October, he handed over his prisoners to Panin.

X One or two sketches of Suvorof on this chase after Pugatchyof were made by an official who was for some days in his company. He rode, as always, with a single Cossack. At the end of a day's march the Cossack lit a bundle of straw in default of better fuel. Suvorof dismounted, took off his coat and breeches, and, holding his shirt over his head, warmed his back at the blaze. Then he warmed his chest and stomach, and lastly sat and warmed himself all round. Then he put on his uniform again, wrapped himself in his cloak, and, lying down on a bundle of hay, with his saddle for a pillow, went straight off to sleep.<sup>1</sup> In more civilised surroundings he was less accommodating. On one occasion the cavalcade pulled up at a house with a high flight of steps leading up to the front door. Suvorof's adjutant told the civilian that he had been careful to tell the housewife not to clean the house and not to put a cloth on the table "because my general can't bear them." Suvorof then trotted up, exclaimed, "Merciful God! Good morning!" dismounted, and ran up the steps, followed by the adjutant. They came out as quickly as they went in, the adjutant first, and Suvorof after him crying at the top of his voice, "Hey, hey, hey, hey!" Down the steps and out through the gates they went.

<sup>1</sup> Reminiscences of Senator Paul S. Rumitch, *Russ. Star.* (1870), ii. 323.

In the road some one contrived to pacify the frantic general, and it was explained that the unfortunate woman had disregarded her orders and had laid the cloth.<sup>1</sup> This is the first appearance in contemporary memoirs of Suvorof the eccentric. The same observer was present at his interview with Panin at Simbirsk, and noticed the profundity of his numerous bows and the puzzled amusement of his colleague, Count Pavel Potyomkin.<sup>2</sup>

After the conclusion of his Pugatchyof expedition Suvorof began to correspond with Count Grigori Potyomkin, the new favourite of the Empress. The letters show him in a new aspect, that of a flatterer and a sycophant. To Potyomkin Suvorof paid unceasing court. He was a gorgeous creature, a Russian Duke of Bedford, the Leviathan among the favourites of Catherine. His great gifts of imagination were matched by great deficiencies in practical capacity. Many contemporaries, Russian and foreign, have described his powerful body, his high forehead and eager eyes, his bright complexion and loose mouth, the width and depth of his knowledge, his amazing memory, the rapidity and variety of his conversation, his vast schemes of conquest, his craving for power, his bursts of energy and his prolonged and immovable lethargy, his condescension towards his inferiors and his jealousy and harshness towards his rivals, his overflowing good humour and his sudden and capricious fits of rage. During the critical part of Suvorof's career this man was the most powerful in Russia. Catherine, even while she chided him for his laziness and indecision, like a true woman paid great deference to the judgement of her big lover. Fortunately for Suvorof, Potyomkin looked upon him with favour, and however he disapproved of his antics, was willing to tolerate them in one who was such a useful instrument of his own

<sup>1</sup> Reminiscences of Senator Paul S. Rumitch, *Russ. Star.* (1870), 324.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 351.

ambitions. "He plays the fool occasionally," he said, "but with all his folly he's a man of brains and capacity; he deserves watching."<sup>1</sup> Suvorof, on his part, was sensible of the value of the great man to himself, and for some years the two worked in a sort of partnership. "One hand washes the other," says the Russian proverb. Potyomkin thus used and advanced Suvorof, and the latter applied himself diligently to tickling the vanity of Catherine's great parasite. It is not without some feeling of humiliation that we read the letters into which Suvorof poured streams of most unworthy adulation.

Thus on the 24th October he wrote from Moscow after receiving a letter of praise from Catherine. He referred to Potyomkin's goodness, to which he ascribed his own happiness:

. . . a recognition so favourable, so great, that I cannot summon strength to express my sincere gratitude. I can collect myself only to make the most unrestrained recognition to my protector, my upholder in my military service, and my benefactor, of his excessive kindnesses, the value of which will never cease to abide in my grateful heart. Honour, Dear Sir, by means of your powerful intercession, a man whose hopes are reposed in your admirable benevolence. The greatness of that benevolence will thus be the more remarkable, and will compel me to sing your praises, while I shall ever remain, with the profound consideration which I owe you and with unhypocritical devotion, etc.<sup>2</sup>

On the 12th June 1777 he wrote in the same strain asking for a command:

Only to your exalted person can I have recourse! Continue to protect, dear sir, one who with unfeigned devotion and most deep respect will remain to the end of his life your most humble servant.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Laverne, 105 n. The words were spoken to the Austrian General Jordis.

<sup>2</sup> *Vorontsof Archives*, xxiv. 286.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 288.



On the 12th March 1779 he wrote :

This new mark of your Excellency's kindness to me transcends all my strength and the sensibility of the gratitude which I owe you. Permit me, illustrious Prince, to devote the remainder of my life to spreading the praises of your so limitless benevolence, and to be always with most deep respect, etc.<sup>1</sup>

On the 21st April 1784 he wrote :

I humbly thank your Serenity for all your great kindness to myself. . . . I confide myself to the exalted patronage of your Serenity and will eternally be, with most profound respect, etc.<sup>2</sup>

This extravagant language, selected at random from many letters, is not pleasant to read. It is, of course, possible that Suvorof fell into an error very common among men of action, and believed Potyomkin to be a much greater thing than he really was. To the soldier, accustomed to authority, order, and obedience, politics will often seem a profound mystery, and the men professionally engaged in it a little beyond his power to understand. In fact, politicians are rarely more than ordinary, and great places in the State are most often not occupied by great men. But Suvorof, accustomed from childhood to solitude and camps, was in his view of the Court a very simple and ignorant man. He may, as a shy and uncomfortable man will, have exaggerated what he supposed to be the qualities of a true courtier. But this explanation, consistent with the letters, is not consistent with all the facts. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Suvorof, for all his greatness, had in him some rather mean jealousy, and that he realised the power of Potyomkin, and flattered him unmercifully in order to get on in the world. If he had looked upon Potyomkin as one great

<sup>1</sup> *Vorontsov Archives*, 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* §304. See further the letters set out, *post*, pp. 77, 81.

man should look upon another, he would have had more respect for his own dignity and for the other man's understanding than to address him in such a style. He wrote himself down to the level of Potyomkin. Neither to Platon Zubof, who succeeded Potyomkin in the favour of Catherine, nor to Rumyantsof, the only other soldier of his day whom he did not pass in the race for promotion, did he ever behave with such servility. He despised Potyomkin's capacity as a soldier, at the same time that he understood the fatal consequences of his jealousy as a favourite, and so long as he felt his own prospects insecure, he flattered him in a style which really degraded one man as much as the other. Potyomkin, on his side, though he laughed at Suvorof's antics, found him a very useful instrument. The man was an admirable soldier, who would go anywhere and do anything, and would never be a rival of his own. A rupture did not take place until Suvorof was strong enough to stand upon his own feet; and it was to Potyomkin's favour that he owed the opportunity of his greatest triumphs. It is not pleasant to contemplate a society in which a man must play the lick-spittle for years to get the chance of showing himself a hero at the last.

The few years immediately following the Pugatchyof rising were spent by Suvorof in work of a less exciting character. During the greater part of 1775 he commanded about 80,000 men in the disaffected districts, and had charge of the work of restoring order. In August he visited Moscow to wind up the affairs of his father, who had just died, and Catherine appointed him to the command of the Petersburg division. This was not to his taste, and he asked for a year's leave. But events in the south soon required the presence of an energetic and capable officer, and at the end of November Potyomkin sent him to the Crimea. The inhabitants of this district, declared by the treaty of peace independent of Turkey, were not yet reconciled to their

new state of dependence on Russia. They were for the most part Tartars, nomad tribes who covered not only the country west and south of the Caspian, but also the whole sweep of fertile but uncultivated land from the frontier of Poland to the Black Sea.<sup>1</sup> They were cattle-breeders, plunderers, and slave-traders, with many of the virtues of savages: courage, loyalty, and fidelity to their pledged word; but intolerant of Western and even of Slav civilisation. Among the Tartars of the Crimea were many Greeks and Armenians, in whose hands were all the trade and industry of the district. Soon after the conclusion of peace Russia began her peaceful penetration of Tartar territory. The centre of Tartary, so far as such a loosely organised society had a centre, was in the Crimea. To control the Crimea was to be at least the predominant power among the tribes. The Khan of the Crimea, Sahib Girei, was deposed by the tribes early in 1775, and Devlet Girei was chosen in his place. Rumyantsov produced Shahin, a brother of Sahib Girei, and getting the support of some of the neighbouring tribes, began to work by persuasion, threats, and bribes to procure his acceptance by the rest.

The Tartars were soon thoroughly aroused, and Turkey began to insist upon the literal observance of the treaty. The Turkish troops were not withdrawn from the Crimea, the Pasha of Trebizond threatened an expedition, the frontier forts were strengthened, and Russian couriers were sometimes cut off on the roads by parties of Tartars. The policy of permeation had produced the desired, or at least the expected, result, and 20,000 Russian troops invaded the Crimea in the beginning of November 1776. Suvorof arrived at the end of the month, leaving his wife and infant daughter at Poltava. He took charge of part of the command of Prince Prozorovski. In March 1777 the usurping

<sup>1</sup> There is a very graphic account of the Tartars in de Tott's *Memoirs*, vols. i. and ii.

Shahin Girei appeared in the Crimea. Devlet Girei fled, and the new Khan was proclaimed.

Suvorof was soon tired of policing the Crimea and preparing defences against the Turks, and he did not like Prozorovski. His fever gave him an excuse for getting leave to go to Poltava. While he was there, Shahin Girei forgot the pit from which he was dugged, and in October the Tartars were in open revolt against their new Russian masters. Prozorovski was too lethargic, the discontent spread rapidly, and in a battle between the Tartars and the Russian troops 450 of the latter and 2000 of the former were killed and wounded. Rumyantsof received the report of Prozorovski, found no mention of Suvorof in it, and asked the reason. Learning with great indignation of his absence at Poltava, he forbade Prozorovski to give any leave to officers of the frontier troops, and ordered Suvorof to return at once to duty. Suvorof did not disobey, but wrote direct to Potyomkin asking for a separate command. He was given that of the corps of Kuban. He reached Kuban in the middle of January 1778, and there occupied himself with the ordinary duties of a frontier commander, improving the defences, cutting off raiding parties of nomads, and looking after the discipline, training, and health of his troops. But he was also something of a diplomatist in this field, and his primitive habits, ridiculous or disgusting to a European ambassador, enabled him to make many friends among the nomads. The Kuban frontier was very quickly set in order, while the continued incompetence of Prozorovski kept the Crimea in an uproar. In April Prozorovski was ordered home on leave, and Rumyantsof put Suvorof in his place.

The situation had changed for the worse. Not only were the Tartars thoroughly discontented, but a Turkish squadron of 8 ships was hovering in the neighbourhood. To Prozorovski Suvorof behaved stiffly, even with insult. He did not visit the man he was to super-

sede. When Prozorovski sent to ask for an interview, he said he was too ill. To a second request he sent the answer that he was out at dinner, and would be going next day to visit the Khan. Prozorovski gave up the attempt to see him, sent his report by an aide-de-camp, and retired from the Crimea. Suvorof, having cleared the ground of his rival, threw himself vehemently into his new duties. He divided the peninsula into districts, increased and improved the defences against the Turks, and issued detailed instructions to his garrisons for their feeding, training, health, and behaviour towards the Tartars. With the Turkish squadron he dealt firmly. Some of its seamen had landed on the coast and killed a Cossack. Without demanding satisfaction, Suvorof began to erect batteries at the mouth of the gulf in which the ships lay. In reply to inquiries what this meant, he referred politely to the unhappy accident which had caused the death of one of his men, and went on with his works. After three days the Turkish commander became nervous, beat his way out of the gulf in the face of an unfavourable wind, and anchored outside. Another and a much larger squadron appeared off the coast in September. Suvorof strengthened his forts, increased the number of his pickets along the shore, and refused to allow the Turks to land even for food and water. Baffled by a persistence which never gave a decent excuse for violence, the whole fleet returned to Constantinople and left Suvorof to deal with the Tartars by themselves.

The most difficult part of his task was the removal of the Christian population. The reason for this step, unique in the history of conquest by permeation, was twofold. The Christian colonists would be useful in populating the empty districts of the mainland, in case the Crimea should for any reason be subsequently abandoned; and as the Christian tribute formed a large part of the revenues of the Khan, the loss of it would reduce him to a more proper condition of sub-

missiveness and dependence on Russia. Suvorof was therefore called upon to transfer some thousands of families from their homes to a distance of many miles. It was a task of enormous difficulty, requiring a vast number of ox-carts, building materials for the new settlements, supplies of food for the journey, and elaborate measures of protection. The exodus began in the face of protests from the Khan, and in default of other vehicles, Suvorof used his baggage waggons and the private carriages of his officers. In the second half of September all was completed; 31,000 people had been transported to the districts between the rivers Berda and Kalmyus, around the Sea of Azof, and along the banks of the Don. It was impossible that such a project should be carried out without great suffering among the Christians themselves. Russian transport and Russian organisation of supplies are always bad, and Suvorof found it very difficult to get money. In August he was writing frantically to Turtchaninof, the Secretary of State:

My dear Sir, money, money, money; count the cost afterwards, the loss won't be great. . . . We must compensate the Christians. . . . Oh my dear man, it's hard work; there's not a bit of money; I would gladly pledge all my villages; nobody to lend. I'm afraid the enterprise will come to a standstill.<sup>1</sup>

Six months after the completion of the work he wrote to Potyomkin:

The Crimean people are suffering in their present situation from the want of many things; look with a merciful eye on those who have sacrificed so much for the throne; sweeten the bitterness of their recollections.<sup>2</sup>

In truth, 31,000 men, women, and children cannot be moved like cattle in a few weeks without much hardship; and the situation of these wretched Greeks

<sup>1</sup> *Otychestvenniya Zapiski* (1824), 379, 382.

<sup>2</sup> *Vorontsof Archives*, xxiv. 294.

and Armenians, settled, at the beginning of a Russian winter, in an unprepared country, at the mercy of fraudulent and corrupt contractors, must have been beyond description. Suvorof's own part had been performed with as much humanity as was consistent with speed, and the Empress, whose feelings were not much affected by the tribulations of a parcel of living movables, praised him for his efficiency. He heard of this from Turtchaninof, and wrote one of his overflowing letters in reply :

Almighty God ! How can I answer your letter of the 1st September ? Mere gratitude of any sort is too little ; mine is without bounds ! No, the sacrifice of myself ; the last drop of my poor blood poured out on the altars of the all-gracious Mother could not repay it. I forget my wife, in the agony of her illness, my little girl, myself ! I remember myself in the service of her Highness alone, wherever it may be, even in the depths of the ocean. God give me strength !<sup>1</sup>

In January 1779 he went to see his sick wife at Poltava. But he stayed there only ten days, and after a circuitous journey was back again in the Crimea in February. In March Russia and Turkey signed a new convention. Turkey recognised Shahin Girei, and the bulk of the Russian troops were withdrawn from the Crimea, leaving a garrison of only 6000 men. At the end of July Suvorof was once more free and returned to Poltava. There he stayed for a few months, it is not known in what sort of activity, but probably fretting at the absence of important work and quarrelling with his wife. In September he went so far as to prepare a case for a divorce, and Varvara Ivanovna went to Moscow.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of the year he was summoned to Peters-

<sup>1</sup> *Otychestvenniya Zapiski* (1824), 387. He was still suffering from fever, and his wife had also fallen ill of it. *Ibid.* 391. See also his letters to Turtchaninof in *Russkaya Starina* (1900), cii. 303 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Pyetrushevski.

burg. There he found the Empress and Potyomkin full of a new project. England and France were now at grips in India, and Potyomkin thought it might be possible to open an overland route for the trade which would fall from the hands of England. With the jewelled star of the Order of St. Alexander Nevski, Suvorof was sent to Astrakhan. There he was to establish order among the frontier tribes near the Caspian Sea. He set off in the good spirits with which he always entered on a new piece of work, taking his wife with him from Moscow. He reached Astrakhan on the 4th February. But the whole scheme was soon shown to be a mere bubble. Whatever misfortunes England might experience in America, she remained mistress of India, and Suvorof found himself once more reduced to idleness and insignificance. He began as usual to fret.

He was harassed in particular by three things: Yakobi, the Governor of Astrakhan, his own wife, and some writers of pasquinades. The Governor was left in complete independence of Suvorof, and as usual the latter showed signs of jealousy. They held the same rank, that of Lieutenant-General, but the Governor, not unreasonably, received special honours in his own province. At one dinner Suvorof was punctual, Yakobi late, and the orchestra began to play as soon as the Governor came in. Suvorof stalked about impatiently, and condemned the dinner as cold, over-cooked, warmed-up. As soon as it was finished, he thrust his hand out to a doctor, who was among the guests, and begged him to feel his pulse. "I have not dined so late for years," he said. Yakobi, who seems to have behaved like a gentleman on all occasions, was obviously offended, but suppressed his feelings and went home. He probably knew the better side of Suvorof, and their official correspondence shows no sign of any serious discord.<sup>1</sup>

Suvorof and his wife appear at Astrakhan in one of the very few definitely recorded scenes of their joint

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1900), cii. 520, 521.



life. They came to church to make a solemn reconciliation. He wore a plain uniform, and she the dress of a woman of the people. They took communion together and embraced each other with tears in the presence of the priest. But the ceremony had no lasting effect, and their relations were soon as bad as ever.<sup>1</sup> Nothing made him amiable but hard work, and nothing made her happy except the gaiety of a capital city. At Astrakhan they bored themselves and each other.

One of his letters to Turtchaninof contains a long complaint:

Many babies have been raised to the same rank as myself. . . . Pr[ozorovski], bedecorated for his numerous victories, sends to me the rumour that I should have been punished if I hadn't performed this duty thoroughly. . . . K[amyenski] in the full tide of victory promises to shoot me if I don't win, and for his heroism gets this and that and I not a kind word, and so for Hirsof—instead of the first class according to the rules, although my victories resound everywhere, like Don-quistism. I can't, my honoured friend, hide the fact that when I betook myself to the society of brigands from the Ural Steppe, after my triumphant pacification, I expected the St. Anne for myself; many people got swords, I should have been content with the Order!<sup>2</sup>

This rehearsal of old grievances was flung gratuitously into the midst of a long letter about the transfer of the Christian population of the Crimea and other matters of serious importance. The same egoism appears in his constant references to the attacks of pamphleteers which he experienced in Astrakhan.

These writers of pasquinades were a new phenomenon in Suvorof's life. Who they were is not clear, and what they wrote only appears from his protests. Probably neither their personalities nor their performances merited the attention of a man of sense. But Suvorof, great man as he was to show himself, was abnormally sensitive

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Arkh.* (1872), 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1900), cil. 305.

of innuendo and insult, and his outcry at Astrakhan was ridiculously shrill. To Turtchaninof he wrote a large number of formal letters, and into these he thrust all sorts of irrelevant references to the pamphleteers. Thus on the 22nd March he bade the Secretary of State

Lament for poor Varvara Ivanovna ; who is dearer to me than my life, or else God will condemn you ! Seeing her condition, I cannot staunch my tears. Defend her honour. Save the honour of the most trustworthy slave of our Mother, now almost forty years in the service of his country. Almighty God be your helper.<sup>1</sup>

Sending Easter greetings to Turtchaninof and his wife in May, he wrote :

I have the honour to wish you many happy returns of the feast which is past, and henceforth I wish you joy and health continuously for countless years to come, and to live them in joy—many happy returns of the day ! . . . I only beg the Creator that he send you all blessings, as many as may be, for your kindness and your benevolence. And as for the damned traducer, please, little father, Pyotr Ivanovitch, try for God's sake to roast him quickly. With this I conclude.<sup>2</sup>

In more than one of these letters he inserted the words, "Remember the shameless !" It is true that Turtchaninof was on intimate terms with him, and was "like father and mother" to his little daughter in Petersburg.<sup>3</sup> But the same lamentations occur in letters to Potyomkin and even Panin. To the former he wrote, setting out in a hurried, almost unintelligible style what the libels were :

This—that he will go to conquer P[ersia]. I only boast that I have served nearly forty years without reproach. I advised Khur about contributions, asked money from your Excellency, calculated my income ; at this time they are not necessary for me or my children. I demanded pretty girls from Kh., a disgraceful story ;

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1900), cii. 307.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 310.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 311.

I know nothing of it except in marriage, and that is why I make such a defence of my honour. Per. fine horses. My travelling expenses most luxurious. There's no chest for them. All sorts of extravagance, diamonds from the highest hands in the World, and tissues from India. I really didn't know I had any. And so forth. There's a triumvirate of pasquinaders here ; A Siberian, an Armenian—Minai Stepanof, and a Tartar—Imangulof. I regard this stupid meanness with contempt, out of the respect of my unshakable spirit for your Serenity. I trust that you, most Serene Prince, will view this beastliness with no less disgust, and, for the sake of the gratification I have given your Serenity's august authority, will now and henceforward graciously tear up all such criminal publications, protect these tried servants of your great Empress, and console me, who am approaching old age and death, with your renowned sense of justice, so that I on my translation from this world, may present to Almighty God a fitting plea of intercession on your behalf.<sup>1</sup>

Even Potyomkin can hardly have stomached the concluding paragraph. The last billow of this storm in a tea-cup broke over the head of Count Peter Panin. On the 4th June the frantic victim wrote to him :

My stoical letter of the last post, with the postscript about the pasquilles against me under the name of Thet. X. must have reached you, my dear Sir ; so patiently I await your answer to it, especially because I have not had a letter from you for more than a month. Honoured friend, make yourself half a quarter of an hour to dwell in thought upon my depression ; all those flattering meteors will vanish, melancholy is the only nourishment of my soul.<sup>2</sup>

Only eight days later he was writing to his kinsman Khvostof, exhorting him to the sternest of virtues :

I remind you that you should follow Aristides in rectitude, Fabriciana in temperance, Epaminondas in

<sup>1</sup> *Voronts. Arkhiv*, xxiv. 312.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 323.

truthfulness, Cato in brevity, Julius Caesar in speed, Turenne in constancy, Laudon in morals.<sup>1</sup>

He played more parts than most of us, and there were even moments when he achieved brevity. But as a rule, his nature ran away from his examples, and it was only in the field that he resembled his classical heroes for more than a few minutes together. The contrast between his precepts and his practice was never more remarkably illustrated than during his stay in Astrakhan.

Nevertheless, his life was not an unbroken succession of pangs of this kind. He lived in a gentleman's house, and could be seen any day, walking about the streets and gardens, giving nuts and gingerbreads to children, and behaving for the greater part of his time like a reasonable and good-natured man. It is on record that he stood sponsor to a Kalmuk who wished to be baptized, and took no small pains to give the man some practical assistance. No other details of his life have been preserved. But it would not be difficult to reconstruct it from what is more definitely known of him in later years, when his littleness and jealousy and ill-humour were no less conspicuous. To children and animals he was uniformly kind, and if he was often angry with his inferiors, it was only by fits. Even at Astrakhan he probably passed the greater part of his time in happiness.

On the 11th January 1782 he received orders from Potyomkin to proceed to Kazan, where he remained until the end of the following August. By that time the Crimea was once more in a state of unrest, and he was told to take over the command of the troops there from Count de Balmaine. Shahin Girei was threatened with deposition, this time in favour of another brother, Arslan Girei. He had fled to the protection of de Balmaine and his army, returned at their head, and remained in the Crimea. Here Suworof came, only to be at once

<sup>1</sup> Martchenko, *Suworof in his Autographs*.

transferred to the river Kuban. This was the extreme boundary of Russian territory on the side of the Caucasus, and he was entrusted with the duty of maintaining order and establishing Russian ascendancy among the Tartars of that region. This was quite to his taste. At Yeisk, on the eastern shore of the Sea of Azov, he entertained 3000 of the nomads, and found it easy to get on to good terms. In April 1783 Catherine issued a manifesto, taking the Crimea, Taman, and Kaman under her protection, and on the 9th July Suvorof held a great assembly of Tartars to swear allegiance to their new overlord. The Steppe around Yeisk was covered with the round wicker-walled, felt-roofed tents of some 6000 Tartars. Russian troops were on their guard, but refrained from any threatening demonstrations. The leaders among the Tartars were summoned to an open space, they listened to the reading of Shahin Girei's renunciation of his rights, and took the oath to Catherine. Dispersing among the tents, they took similar oaths from their personal followers. There followed a colossal banquet. It lasted three days, and in the course of it there disappeared 100 oxen, 800 sheep, a large quantity of other solids, and 1250 gallons of vodka. It is recorded, and the fact is not at all improbable, that this display of loyalty was too much for the Tartars, and many of them paid for their devotion with their lives. On the 11th July the guests dispersed, full of enthusiasm for a monarch who treated her subjects in this lavish style, and a few weeks later Suvorof received from Catherine the Order of St. Vladimir of the first class.

Nevertheless, this formal allegiance did not prevent the nomads from raiding the Don territory and giving shelter to deserters and fugitives from justice. Turkey was not slow to take advantage of any tendency to resent Russian control, and Shahin Girei began to repent of his abdication. To avoid an outbreak on a large scale, Potyomkin and Suvorof encouraged a half-formed desire of the Tartars to migrate to the Ural Steppe,

further north, and pressure was applied to those tribes who would not go of their own will. A chain of posts was stretched from Yeisk along the Don, and to the east of this the groups of men and herds were carefully shepherded towards the Volga. On the 11th August there was a serious fight 60 miles to the north-east of Yeisk. The Tartars fell upon a Russian post, Suvorof with reinforcements came up, and after a vain attempt at persuasion, attacked them fiercely. There followed a massacre of the brave but disorganised barbarians. About 3000 were killed, and the Tartars themselves killed a large number of their women and flung their children into the river Eya. Only 60 old men, women, and children were taken prisoner. The bulk of the cattle and horses, estimated at 20,000 head, were also captured, and deprived of these, many of the nomads who escaped from the field perished miserably of hunger on the Steppe. The advance of civilisation seems often to be accompanied by the sacrifice of an unnecessary number of minor actors in the great comedy.

This untoward incident spoiled the whole project of transferring the Tartars to the Ural country. A general revolt began among those who remained near the Kuban, and an attack was actually made upon Yeisk itself. Suvorof returning swiftly from the north, the raiders crossed the river. An attempt to arrest Shahin Girei failed, and Potyomkin, showing great irritation, ordered Suvorof to follow him beyond the Kuban. On the 30th September an expedition, consisting of 16 companies of infantry, 16 squadrons of dragoons and as many of Cossacks, and 16 guns, left Kopuil. Suvorof ostentatiously proclaimed his intention of going to Poltava, where troops were to be concentrated for a threatened war with Austria. In fact, he marched eastwards along the right bank of the Kuban, generally by night, and over such difficult ground that in 10 days he covered no more than 80 miles. On the 10th October he forded the river at its junction with the Laba, the

infantry up to their necks in water and the cavalry carrying the reserve ammunition and baggage slung between each pair of horses. Eight miles beyond the Kuban they fell upon a large body of Tartars, near the village of Kermentchik. The Russians were exhausted, but the nomads were completely unprepared; and in a running fight over a distance of 6 miles 4000 of them were killed. On this occasion the trophies were 700 men, women, and children, 6000 cattle, and 15,000 sheep. The punitive expedition, after an exhausting march, reached Yeisk at the end of October.<sup>1</sup> It was not until the autumn of 1784 that the recalcitrant Shahin Girei made his final submission, induced as much by the promise of a yearly pension of 200,000 roubles, as by the threat of further military operations.

Suvorof had left Kuban in April, and went by way of Moscow to Petersburg. What he did there for the next few months is not known. His name appears occasionally in the correspondence of Turtchaninof with Potyomkin, but not in connection with anything worthy of note. The only living pictures of him in this period are painted by himself in his letters. On the 21st December he wrote to Potyomkin this strange epistle:

ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE AND DEAR SIR—With the approach of the New Year I most humbly greet your Serene Highness.

The year which is now expiring I have passed in a village, among a few soldiers, in the expectation of receiving from your Serene Highness some special command of my own, as I have usually commanded a division or a corps; especially, Dear Sir, there is a vacancy for me in the Brusova or Ryenin division. In the direction of the first are some villages of my own. But it does not matter, illustrious Prince! where I receive from your Serene Highness' gracious kindness a special command—even in Kamtchatka.

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 165 *et seq.* Suvorof's work among the Tartars is the subject of several papers in the *Don Military News* (*Donskiya Voyenniya Vyedomosti*), to which I was unable to get access.

In my spare time, I have bought 92 souls with a bill of exchange, which I shall discharge in two years. I have left behind in Kuban savings of more than 100,000 roubles, and in my short stay salary for four months. There's my avarice.

At Kopuil the commander was not Filisof but Nikolai Rachmanof—on to the field with a regiment, off it with a battalion (I did not waste so many men in proportion in one year of my service)—and he composed pasquilles against me.

I have served, Dear Sir! more than 40 years, and I am almost 60; my one wish is to end my most honourable service sword in hand. My long stay in the lower ranks got me a roughness of habit, though it left me with a spotless heart, and deprived me of all acquaintance with polished manners; living all my life in the field, I was late in accustoming myself to them. Study enlightened me in virtue; I lie like Epaminondas, fly like Caesar; I am constant as Turenne and straightforward as Aristides; not understanding the devious ways of flattery and adulation, I am often displeasing to my superiors. I have broken my word to none of my enemies, I have been happy, because I have ordained happiness.

Give peace to the mind of one not guilty before you—for that I will answer before the Dread Divine Tribunal—and grant me a separate command. Pluck me out of idleness, but do not imagine therefore that I have been in the least dissatisfied with Count Ivan Petrovitch, only that I cannot live in luxury. In a strange land—and in idleness, too.

I trust in the gracious kindness of your Serene Highness, and will be to my death with the profoundest respect, etc.<sup>1</sup>

^ The request was granted, and in 1785 Suworof received the command of the Petersburg division. But for that fact as little is known of his life in the north after the date of the letter as before it. He emerges into the light only in October, when he was promoted to the rank of General-in-Chief and was given the command of the troops at Kremenchug. In 1786 he

<sup>1</sup> *Vorontsof Archives*, xxiv.



wrote the *Autobiography* which is still preserved in the Imperial Library in Petrograd. In 1787 he was seen among the men who surrounded Catherine during her triumphal progress through her newly acquired territories. The task of settling and organising these naturally rich but hitherto undeveloped districts had been entrusted to Potyomkin, and since the treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardzhi his principal task had been the establishment of colonists, the planning of towns, and the erection of fortifications in "New Russia." In January 1787 the Empress set out from Petersburg with a train of 14 carriages and 120 sledges. At each station she found 560 fresh horses; during the darkness the road was illuminated by huge bonfires at every hundred yards; the inhabitants of the towns and villages along the route welcomed her with cheers, the ringing of church bells, and shots from cannon. At Kief, almost at the limit of her old dominions, she stayed for three months; and in the spring she proceeded by water, with a fleet of 80 barges, through the lands which her favourite had been arranging for the past twelve years. She visited Kremenchug, Potyomkin's new town of Kherson, Sevastopol, Simferopol, and Kafan, and returned by way of Poltava and Moscow to the capital.

At Kanyef she had met the King of Poland and the Emperor Joseph II., and at Kief she was visited by an enormous number of foreign magnates of every nation. Against this gorgeous background of palaces and courtiers, fireworks, triumphal arches, music, and feasting we are furnished with one or two glimpses of the ungraceful figure of Suvorof. The French Ambassador, the Comte de Ségur, made notes of him, as of every other unusual incident. "Is it true," he asked him, "that when you're with the army you never go to sleep?" "Oh yes," replied Suvorof; "I hate idleness. To prevent myself from going to sleep, I always keep a very punctual cock in my tent. But sometimes, when I'm lazy and want to rest in real comfort, I

take off one of my spurs.”<sup>1</sup> Another Frenchman encountered Suworof in a less frivolous mood. This was Colonel Lameth. Meeting him in the street, Suworof accosted him in his most abrupt style, “What’s your nationality?” Lameth, not a little surprised, answered urbanely, “French.” There followed a series of demands. “Calling?” — “Soldier.” “Rank?” — “Colonel.” “Name?” — “Alexander Lameth.” “Good!” and Suworof turned to go. But Lameth got in front of him and opened fire in his turn. “What’s your nationality?” “Russian,” replied Suworof. “Calling?” — “Soldier.” “Rank?” — “General.” “Name?” — “Suworof.” “Good!” Whereupon both laughed, and they remained on good terms for the rest of their stay in Kief.<sup>2</sup> For the rest, no doubt he devoted himself to keeping his men fit, sneering at his professional rivals, paying court to Potyomkin, and sniffing the rumours of fresh wars, which came blowing from the Balkans.

<sup>1</sup> De Ségur, *Mémoires*, iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER V

### THE SECOND TURKISH WAR

Alliance of Russia and Austria against Turkey—Outbreak of war, 1787—Suvorof at Kinburn—Battle at Kinburn, 1787—Suvorof wounded—Attack from the sea, 1788—Siege of Otchakof—Letter to his daughter—Difference with Potyomkin—Suvorof in Moldavia, 1789—Battle of Fokshani—Battle of the Ruimnik—Rewards—Correspondence—Fruitless campaign of 1790—The amiable Coburg—The storm of Izmail—Alienation of Potyomkin—Peace with Turkey.

THE Peace of Kutchuk-Kainardzhi proved to be no more than an armistice. The recognition of the independence of the Crimea was from the day of the signature of the treaty a mere form, and as the Russian hold upon the lost province was steadily tightened the restlessness of the Porte increased. Catherine's triumphal progress was the final outrage, and the whispers of her European enemies found the Turk a ready listener. The Asiatic bandits were once more employed for the ulterior purposes of civilised European States. England and Prussia on this occasion joined with France to incite Turkey against the growing power of Russia, while Sweden also adopted a menacing attitude in the north. The possibility of an Austro-Russian alliance precipitated the crisis. The growing harmony between Catherine and Joseph II. threatened Turkey with a partition resembling that of Poland, and in the hope of anticipating an aggressive alliance, Turkey flung out a formal declaration of war on the 24th August 1787.

This came too late to prevent the union of the two Christian States, and Austria prepared for an attack

across the Danube and the Carpathians, while the Russian troops were collected for a new invasion of Moldavia. One army, that of the Ukraine, under Rumyantsof, was intended to act as a guard over Poland, and at the same time unite the active army with the Austrians. The second army, that of Ekaterinoslav, was commanded by Potyomkin. Its plan was to march, by way of Otchakof, across the Dnyestr and the Prut to the Danube. Suvorof's sphere of operations was the Crimea, where he commanded 20 battalions of infantry and 38 squadrons of cavalry. His was in fact the post of danger. His fortress of Kinburn lay on a narrow peninsula immediately opposite Otchakof, and every year a Turkish squadron sailed between the two places. On the 18th August, before the actual declaration of war, the Turkish commander at Otchakof informed a Russian officer from Kinburn that a state of war existed, and the next day a brisk but indecisive little action took place in the narrow gulf. Even after this general hostilities were avoided, but Suvorof, finding a Turkish squadron lying dangerously near Kherson, at the extreme eastern end of the same gulf, compelled it to withdraw by throwing up batteries which threatened to cut the Turks off from the open sea. The gallant behaviour of a Maltese named Lombardo, commanding one ship of the Russian flotilla, practically compelled the whole Turkish fleet to retreat upon Otchakof. Suvorof's own work, during the few weeks preceding and following the declaration of war, consisted in visiting the different parts of his district. The slovenliness and corruption of the Turkish Government had progressively increased since the last war, and if the Russians were slow in collecting their energies for the struggle, the Turks were even worse.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is a good contemporary account of the state of Turkey in Volney's *Considérations sur la guerre actuelle des Turcs*. The author, a resident in Turkey, takes a Gladstonian view of the Turks and the maintenance of them as necessary to the European balance of power. See also de Tott's *Mémoires*.

It was not until the end of September that the Turkish dispositions became dangerous, and he hurried to Kinburn, their obvious objective.

For the delay on the Russian side Potyomkin was responsible. The proper method of defending Kinburn was an attack on Otchakof. But Potyomkin was immersed in lethargy, and his overflowing confidence received a great shock in the crippling of the Sevastopol fleet by a storm. So complete was his moral overthrow that he thought of evacuating the Crimea, and even asked leave to resign his command and go to Petersburg. "Did the wind blow only on the Russians?" asked Catherine, and told him he had no more endurance than a five-year-old child. But her sarcasm failed to arouse him in time to rescue Suvorof.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, Suvorof was the last man in the world to look for salvation elsewhere than in himself. From the 29th September to the 1st October the Turks bombarded Kinburn with great vigour, and about 9 o'clock on the morning of the last day, they began to land in boats in two places.

Kinburn lay across a long and narrow peninsula, about 4 miles from its western point. One landing, 8 miles to the east, was a mere demonstration. The real attempt was made from the west. Here the Turks disembarked at the extremity of the peninsula some 5000 men led by French officers. Suvorof received the news with great coolness, and said, "Let them all jump out; don't interfere." Accordingly no attempt was made to prevent the landing, and the Turks were permitted to advance steadily along the peninsula, throwing up, as they came, fifteen separate lines of entrenchments, sand-bags, and chevaux-de-frise, without a shot being fired against them. The trenches were not very deep, as water rose in them at a short distance below the surface. They were therefore

<sup>1</sup> Potyomkin's correspondence during this war has been printed in *Russkaya Starina* (1875), ii. 40 *et seq.*

strengthened by parapets of sand-bags.<sup>1</sup> They ran from the southern edge of the land to within a short distance of the northern, whence the movable chevaux-de-frise formed a barrier to the water's edge, which could be removed at any time for advance or retreat. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when the last line was completed at a distance of about 1000 yards from the fortress, Suvorof gave the signal for the attack, a salvo from all the guns which could be brought to bear upon the enemy.

Detailed description of the fight which followed is impossible. It took the form of a scramble along the sandy spit and in the shallow water on either side of it, and more depended on personal strength and courage than on any tactical dispositions. The Russians advanced at first in two lines. In the first were two battalions and five companies of infantry, and in the second two battalions. Four squadrons of cavalry and some Cossacks moved along the southern shore somewhat in the rear of the infantry. In this formation, Suvorof himself among the first, they attacked the Turkish entrenchments, and a hand-to-hand contest ensued, which continued for the rest of the day and half of the night. The opposing troops were generally so intermingled that the artillery on both sides was silent almost throughout the action. The first charge drove the Turks out of ten trenches, but the battle surged back again, and at one moment Suvorof himself barely escaped being killed. Mistaking a Turk holding a horse by the bridle for a dismounted Cossack, he was taken completely off his guard. He was on the point of being cut down, when a musketeer named Novikof bayoneted one Turk, knocked down another with the butt, and drove off a third. Seeing the danger of their commander the retreating Russians turned and swept the enemy back once more. This advance was harassed by a flanking fire from the Turkish fleet, but the guns

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii, 6, 14.

of the fortress sank one ship, and the daring Lombardo, putting out against the whole strength of the enemy, actually chased seventeen ships and sank one of them. Taking his vessel for a fire-ship, the enemy squadron kept at a safe distance for the rest of the battle, and the hand-to-hand fight went on without further interference from the sea.

During this naval diversion the Russians had once more given ground. The commander of the first line, the Ryebok who had distinguished himself at Turtukai in the last war, had been twice wounded and carried off the field, and Suvorof himself was hit in the left side. Falling back, the Russians even abandoned some of their regimental cannon. Suvorof sent for reinforcements. Every man who could be spared from the fortress and all the guard of the baggage lager in the rear, were collected. Followed by some cavalry, for whom Suvorof had sent in the morning to a distance of 20 miles, they threw themselves into the surging mass upon the promontory. This third attack was successful. Suvorof was wounded again by a chance bullet striking his left arm. But his men were now not to be denied, and the Turks were literally driven into the sea. By way of compelling his men to stand their ground, the Turkish commander had recalled all the small boats, and to protect himself, had built a stockade between the ships and the land. Nothing was left to the fugitives but a choice of deaths. Some escaped by swimming, and several hundred wounded were picked up by the fleet the next day. But many were drowned, and the corpses on the field of battle were estimated at 1500. Four-fifths of the whole force had perished. For long after the day of the battle corpses continued to be thrown up on the beach, and on the 9th November no fewer than 70 of these miserable pieces of jetsam were collected and buried. The Russian losses were heavy. About 250 were killed and 750 wounded, almost one-third of the

force which Suworof commanded for the greater part of the battle, and a proportion unusually large in the record of his Turkish victories.<sup>1</sup>

The rest of the year passed without any important military event. Suworof spent the time in training his troops, and, to avoid a second descent upon Kinburn, kept the ice broken all round the promontory.<sup>2</sup> As late as February he was still suffering from his wound, and his left arm could not hold the bridle. But this did not prevent him undertaking journeys on horseback of as much as 350 miles. In the meantime the prospects of a general success improved. In January Austria declared war against Turkey, and a decent display of energy on the part of the Allies should have driven the enemy across the Danube. But neither the Austrians nor the Russians were competently led, and on land practically the whole year was wasted. Nevertheless, in a series of naval actions, in which the guns of the fortress of Kinburn played some part, the Prince of Nassau-Siegen destroyed the Turkish Black Sea Fleet.<sup>3</sup> For Suworof this year was of importance, because during it began an estrangement between him and Potyomkin, or rather a dissolution of that strange relationship of patron and client which had so long existed between them. On the 20th June the Turks made a sea attack upon Kinburn, but were driven off with the loss of 17 ships and 1800 prisoners, the Russians losing less than 100 men. After this the great military enterprise of the year was begun; the siege of Otchakof. The siege occupied nearly six months, and wasted 20,000 Russian lives. Potyomkin's lethargy and caprice

<sup>1</sup> *Campagnes*, ii. 5 *et seq.*; Pyetrof, i. 94 *et seq.* A few weeks after the battle the cable of Lombardo's ship was broken in a gale. It drifted into the middle of the Turkish fleet and its commander was made a prisoner (*Campagnes*, ii. 25).

<sup>2</sup> See his instructions in Pyetrof, i. Appendix 8.

<sup>3</sup> Nassau-Siegen was a soldier of fortune. He commanded the floating batteries at the siege of Gibraltar. See *Le Prince Charles de Nassau-Siegen*, by the Marquis D'Aragon. In the Black Sea he was assisted by Paul Jones.



never appeared more fatal to the success of his enterprises. He lacked both the courage for a storm and the patience for a siege. He began siege operations half-heartedly, hoping that the Turks would surrender to the mere display of force, and even when his batteries had at last inflicted heavy damage upon the fortress, shrank from ordering a direct assault. It was not until the 17th December, when many of his men and animals had perished miserably of cold and hunger, that he carried the place by storm.<sup>1</sup>

During the earlier operations Suvorof had commanded the left or northern wing of the besieging army, and a letter to his daughter gives a sketch of him :

DARLING SUVOROVIE, I kiss you ! You have again delighted me with your letter of the 30th April ; I answered one of yours yesterday. If, please God, we are alive and well and see each other, glad shall I be to talk to you about heroes old and new ; only teach me how to follow after them. Eh ! Suvorovie, how are you, my soul, in your white dress ? Keep well and grow big. My humble respects to gracious Madame Sophia Ivanovna. What a caterwauling they're setting up at night now in Otchakof—the dogs howl like wolves, the cows moo, the cats squall, the goats bleat ! I sleep on a sand bank ; it's so far into the sea, the gulf—as I walk I can hear what they're saying ; they're so near us, lots of them on such huge ships, six big ones, up to the sky, sails on them a verst across ; we can see them smoking their tobacco ; they sing doleful songs. On one ship there are more of them than you have flies in the whole Smolni—red men, green men, blue men, grey men. Their guns are as big as the room where you sleep with the sisters. God bless you !—Your father

ALEXANDER SUVOROF.<sup>2</sup>

However cheerfully he might write to his twelve-year-old daughter, he was in fact chafing at his inaction.

<sup>1</sup> On the day of assault the temperature was 20 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit.

<sup>2</sup> This letter is in the *Sbornik*. It is printed in *Letters and Papers*, p. 30.

His impatience at Potyomkin's delays and pusillanimity gradually overcame his ambition and his interest. Operations began on the 1st July, and on the 27th the Turks made a sally directly against Suworof's own position. Suworof wanted nothing better, and a savage battle began among the gardens and cottages on the outskirts of the town. But his men were hard pressed and began to give way. Throwing himself on the ground before them he cried, "Stop, my Paladins! they've not hit you; they've hit me! you're crushing me! Stop!" They halted, and some sprang to pick him up. Thereupon he leaped to his feet, crying "You've healed me."<sup>1</sup> But this rally was short. Suworof himself was wounded in the neck by a bullet, and as the enemy were on the spot in superior numbers, he instructed his successor to withdraw. Unhappily the retreat became a rout, and the Russian losses reached the figure of 500 killed, wounded, and prisoners. Three times Potyomkin, instead of falling upon the Turks and entering the fortress on their heels, had sent orders to Suworof to discontinue the fight, and a fourth messenger found the surgeons taking the bullet out of Suworof's neck. In response to the peremptory order, the latter, doubtless smarting more from disappointment than from the wound, insolently replied in doggerel:

" I'll not get this rock off,  
I'll look at Otchakof."

A few days later he retired to Kinburn, and the breach between him and Potyomkin was never quite healed. His letters to the Grandee were still of the same flattering kind. But his contempt for the Favourite Fainéant never waned, and the latter never forgot how his fantastic client had insulted him. Nevertheless, at the end of the year Potyomkin recommended Suworof for his services during the whole

<sup>1</sup> This incident was related by an eye-witness to Glinka. See *Russkoe Tchtyniye* (1842), ii. 197.

campaign, and the Empress sent him a diamond aigret bearing her initial. The next year brought him greater glory and a complete loss, if not of Imperial, at least of Vice-Imperial favour.

In the interval he narrowly escaped death by accident. When barely convalescent he was roused in his room at Kinburn by the explosion of a magazine, and for several minutes the air was filled with bursting shells. He leapt from his bed a few seconds before it was broken to pieces, and splinters wounded him in the face, chest, and knee. Eighty officers and men were killed and wounded, and Suvorof's own condition was for a time very grave. Nevertheless, his constitution and his temperate living triumphed, and by the beginning of the next year he was completely recovered. In the campaign of 1789 he was fortunate enough to be independent of the luxurious indolence of the Commander-in-Chief. In January Potyomkin travelled to Petersburg, and a triumphal reception eclipsed for a time the rising splendours of Platon Zubof, the new favourite of the Empress. In the beginning of March he returned to his army of Ekaterinoslav, where he lapsed once more into inactivity. The army of the Ukraine behaved with more vigour, and General Derfelden in the beginning of April twice inflicted heavy defeats on the enemy in the neighbourhood of Buirlad. Here, at the end of April, Suvorof took over the command. To gratify the jealousy of Potyomkin the two Russian armies had just been united under him alone, and Rumyantsov, deprived of his command of the army of the Ukraine, spent the whole of 1789 in idleness at Jassy. This army was now put under the direct command of Prince Ryepnin, to whom Suvorof was responsible for the detachment at Buirlad.

The Moldavian theatre of war presented few striking features. Bounded on the west by the Carpathians and on the east by the Steppes of Bessarabia, it consists of long valleys running north and south between low

chains of hills. The three main valleys are those of the Seret, the Buirlad, and the Prut, and down these run the main roads. Suvorof's station at Buirlad lay in the midst of these three channels of communication, at a point where gaps in the hills to east and west lead to Falchi on the Prut and Adzhud on the Seret. It was thus possible for him to move without difficulty into either of the other two valleys, or advance along that of the Buirlad, as occasion required. The extreme left of the Austrians extended to the Seret, so that contact could easily be made with them.

The military situation at the beginning of 1789 was not favourable to the Allies. Potyomkin's procrastination in the previous years had produced no worse consequences than the deaths of some thousands of men and animals from exposure. The Austrians, equally dilatory and more pedantic, had strung their troops out in a long line along the frontier of the Banat and Transylvania, and on the 18th August the Grand Vizier, Yussuf Pasha, inflicted a crushing defeat upon one section of it near Staraya Orshova. The advance of an Austrian force, in co-operation with Rumyantsov, in northern Moldavia, had compelled the Turks to withdraw. But the enemy had no reason to look forward with any apprehension to the opening of the campaign of 1789. As soon as the subsidence of the Spring floods made military operations possible, the Grand Vizier prepared for new triumphs. Unfortunately for his fame, he chose on this occasion to come within reach of Suvorof.

The Turkish plan was simplicity itself. The Prince of Coburg lay at Adzhud, 35 miles north-west of Fokshani on the Seret, with 18,000 Austrians. Suvorof was at Buirlad, 40 miles from Coburg, with Derfelden's Russian Division, 13,000 strong, consisting of 15 battalions of infantry, 18 regiments of cavalry, and 30 field-guns, besides the regimental artillery. The remainder of the Russians were in the neighbour-

hood of Olviopol, unable to move owing to want of supplies, or just beginning a leisurely march in the direction of Bendyeri. Osman Pasha, in command of the Turks at Fokshani, decided to fall upon Coburg and annihilate him, and then deal with the Russians. Coburg applied for help to Ryepnin, who ordered Suvorof to go to his assistance. Leaving about 3000 men to hold Buirlad, Suvorof set out with the remaining 10,000 at 6 o'clock in the afternoon of the 27th July. He sent ahead a messenger, with a letter of two words: "Coming. Suvorof." At 10 o'clock in the evening of the next day he marched his men up on the Austrian left. The journey of 40 miles, over some of the worst roads in the world, had been completed in 28 hours.<sup>1</sup> The 29th was spent in throwing three pontoon bridges across the Trotusha. Coburg sat in anxious council with his officers, but asked in vain for Suvorof's advice. His first appeal brought an incomprehensible answer. His second messenger could only say that the general was at his prayers. The third had to inform Coburg that Suvorof was asleep. Suvorof was determined at all costs to avoid a general conference. "Otherwise we should have wasted all the time in discussions, diplomatical, tactical, enigmatical; they would have smothered me, and the enemy would have settled our arguments by smashing up our tactics."<sup>2</sup> The Prince, whatever his faults, was at least a model of courteous patience. He waited until 11 o'clock, when he received this letter from Suvorof:

The troops advance at 2 in the morning in three columns, centre consisting of Russians. The enemy to be attacked with all forces, not troubling about petty attempts to right or left, so as to get by dawn to the river Putna, which we are to cross, continuing the

<sup>1</sup> I was at Buirlad in April 1917. The country between that place and Jassy was still flooded, the water in some places being more than a mile across. South of Buirlad, however, the inundation was very much less, though the mud was still indescribably Balkan.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Fuchs, *Campaign of 1799*.

attack. They say that the Turks before us are 50,000 and beyond them 50,000 more ; pity that they are not all together, it would have been better to finish with them all at once.<sup>1</sup>

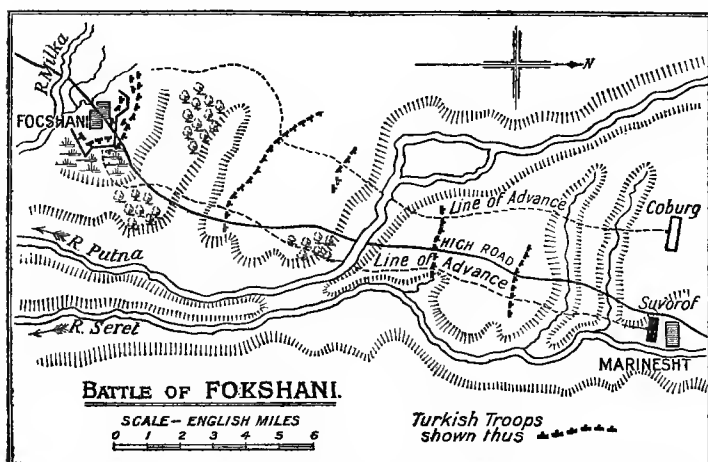
Coburg, as modest as he was urbane, received these orders with judicious meekness, and the disunion which would have been provoked by such treatment of almost everybody else, was in this case avoided.

The actual start was made at 3 in the morning, and there were only two columns instead of three. The Austrians formed the right, the Russians the left, but, to deceive the enemy, some Austrian horse rode ahead of Derfelden's men. Marinesht was reached on the 31st, and on the evening of the same day there was some brisk cavalry fighting between that place and the river Putna. The rivers Putna and Seret, which at the level of Marinesht on the right bank of the latter are five and a half miles apart, converge very rapidly 7 miles lower down, and the Putna cuts almost at right angles across the road from Marinesht to Fokshani. For another seven miles the rivers run almost parallel, a mile apart, separated by a chain of low hills. Fokshani itself is situated on the little river Milka, which runs into the Putna at that point. The first cavalry encounters took place between the two rivers north of the point of convergence, the Turks being separated from their main body by the Putna. After some vigorous charges the Russian horse were pushed back by superior numbers, but eventually the enemy were driven over the river in such confusion that the tent of Osman Pasha himself was actually captured and burnt to the ground. Darkness and heavy rain put an end to this day's fighting.

The work of throwing a pontoon bridge over the Putna was begun at once, in spite of the continuous rain and the swelling of the river itself. A night attack

<sup>1</sup> Laverne, 161 *n*. The author's authority was a French Engineer officer, who was told the story by an Austrian officer named Jordis.

by the Turks drove the advanced troops back across the river and was repelled with some difficulty by an Austrian battalion on the left bank. Nevertheless, the bridge was finished by 11 o'clock and Suvorof crossed at once. At 4 o'clock in the morning the Austrians followed, and by 7 o'clock both forces, beating away the Turkish horse who had attempted to oppose the crossing, advanced towards Fokshani. At a distance of 3 miles from the river, it being then 9 o'clock, they encountered the enemy in force.



The Turks attacked in front and from both flanks at once. The Allies were never in danger, and their continuous artillery and musketry fire dispersed every charge. Crossing a deep gully, crowned on the far side by a wood, they moved forward unbroken, the enemy making no attempt to use these formidable natural defences. Swerving to the left from the road, Suvorof led his detachment through a tract of marshy ground covered with reeds, which concealed his movements from the enemy. Emerging from this, outside their right flank, he was attacked by their cavalry, and his Cossacks fell back upon the infantry. But as

before, the latter had no difficulty in coping with the Turks, drove them back in their turn, and opened fire at point-blank range upon the entrenched line in front of Fokshani. To their right the Austrians adopted the same tactics. The Turkish artillery was silenced, and on all sides the merciless fire poured upon the masses of undisciplined infantry in the trenches. The Spahis galloped headlong from the field, and pursued by the allied cavalry, the footmen ran in all directions. By 4 o'clock in the afternoon the position was taken. Some of the fugitives took refuge in the monastery of St. Spiridon, a short distance to the rear. Here they were attacked by the Austrians and Russians simultaneously, the gates were beaten in by artillery, and every Turk was killed, a few desperate spirits blowing up the powder magazine in a cellar of the monastery rather than surrender.

The victory was lightly won. The Russian casualties were 150, the Austrian, 200. The Turkish dead alone were reckoned at 1500, and the victors retained 12 guns and 16 standards as trophies. The ease with which the small civilised army had defeated the host of barbarians of four times its own strength, shows with how little effort Europe might have expelled the Turks, if only it could have resolved to unite against them. Nevertheless, the completeness of their defeat at Fokshani was soon to be eclipsed by their stupefying overthrow on the Ruimnik and the storm of the great fortress of Izmail.<sup>1</sup>

For Suvorof the battle at Fokshani brought not only fame, but the friendship of his Austrian colleague. Coburg, the pattern of a courtly gentleman, willingly acknowledged the superiority of his fantastic associate, and without any sign of jealousy or rivalry praised him

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 35 *et seq.*; *Pyetrof*, ii. 32 *et seq.* Shortly before the battle Suvorof had injured one of his feet, and he limped badly. The Turks in consequence nicknamed him "Topal Pasha," or "Captain Stump" (*Campaignes*, ii. 51).

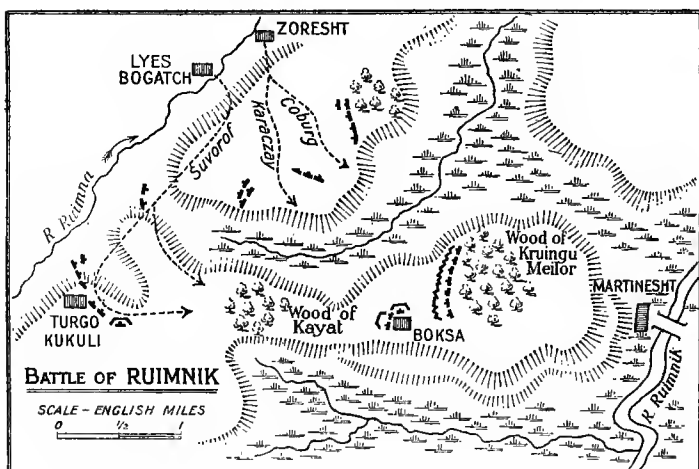


and thanked him. The friendship between these two remained unbroken, and Suvorof's constant affection for the bland and unassuming aristocrat is one of the most pleasing expressions of his versatility.

On the 5th August Suvorof returned to Buirlad. The victory at Fokshani, tactically complete, had no strategic consequences. Neither he nor Coburg had sufficient troops for an advance into Turkish territory, and Potyomkin, with the main Russian army, was still beyond the Dnyestr. The initiative was still with the Turks, and the Grand Vizier began at once to meditate revenge. Making a feint from Izmail into Bessarabia, he gathered a large army for a second attack on Suvorof and Coburg in Moldavia. The diversion in Bessarabia was well countered by Prince Ryepnin, who pushed right up to the walls of Izmail itself. But the principal movement was made in such force that Coburg's advanced army was at one time in great difficulties. About 90,000 Turks threatened him at Fokshani, and, as before, he sent for help to Suvorof at Buirlad. The latter had received some reinforcements from Ryepnin, and on the night of the 18th September he left Buirlad with about 7800 men. Coburg, with about 17,000 Austrians, came into contact with the enemy on the 19th, and some hard fighting took place between Fokshani and the river Ruimna. By 10 o'clock in the morning of the 21st Suvorof's little army, much fatigued by its march over the muddy roads, united with the Austrians between the rivers Milka and Ruimna. Beyond the latter lay the enemy, and Suvorof climbed a tree to reconnoitre their position. The ground presented some formidable obstacles to an advance on the part of the Allies. The banks of the Ruimna rose steeply, and beyond the rise there was a fall into a swampy bottom traversed from right to left by another stream. Beyond this was a steeper and loftier ascent to the hill crowned by the wood of Kruingu Meilor. This hill was almost surrounded by

marshland, which swept round into the bed of the Ruimnik. The only easy approach to it was by a narrow neck, which led directly to the summit from the bank of the Ruimna, without falling to the level of the intervening marsh. But this neck also was in part covered by the wood of Kayat, and the whole ground was cut up by a number of the ravines and gullies which everywhere intersect the soft clayey soil of this region. The main Turkish force, with 28 guns, was entrenched on the height of Kruingu Meilor, its flanks extending over a front of a mile to the steep banks of the swampy streams to north and south. On the right it was additionally protected by dense masses of thorn bushes and high grass, but the left was open. Here, however, was situated the little village of Boksa, which was occupied by the Turks as part of their defence works. In front of the village one battery swept the approach from Kayat, and another fired across the front of the line of trenches, so as to take an attacking force in flank. In case of defeat the wood in his rear, extending almost to the extremity of his left, threatened the Grand Vizier with the loss of everything which could not get away on its own feet. But defeat was not within his contemplation. With more energy he might have destroyed Coburg before Suworof came on the scene. But where victory was certain, a day was of no importance. The same fatal confidence inspired him still, and though he had thrown up earthworks to defend the bridge across the Ruimnik at Martinesht directly to his rear, he was so careless that his trenches in front of Kruingu Meilor itself were not completed when they were actually attacked at the end of the battle. He had sent forward a strong detachment to occupy the village of Turgo-Kukuli, at the point where the approach to his main position sprang from the bed of the Ruimna, a mile and three-quarters from Boksa, and he awaited with equanimity the approach of his enemy.

Suvorof's mind was soon made up. The Allies were to cross the Ruimna at Zoresht and Bogatch, 2 miles below Turgo-Kukuli. The Russians would then move upon Turgo-Kukuli, drive out the troops occupying it, and follow them along the high ground to Boksa. As soon as Boksa was taken the Austrians were to attack the Turkish right, while the Russians pressed on against their left. The enemy would thus be driven into the wood and through it into the Ruimnik. The



plan involved a march across the front of the enemy's position from the point of crossing the Ruimna to Turgo-Kukuli, and in the face of any other adversary than the Turk, it would have involved a very rash exposure of the Russian troops. But a Turkish army made risks justifiable which could never be undertaken in operations against any other, and the event attested the wisdom of Suvorof's judgement. At 7 o'clock on the evening of the 21st the Allies moved towards the Ruimna and began to throw pontoon bridges across it. The Turkish advanced post held stolidly to its position, the bridges were completed, and by dawn all the troops

were drawn up in order of battle on the right bank of the river. Suvorof had about 7000 men, Saxe-Coburg 18,000. In both armies the infantry were drawn up in two lines of squares, with the cavalry in the rear, the Austrians for the first time adopting this formation for their infantry. The Russian squares were six in number, three in each line, and the Austrians ten, six in the first line and four in the second. In both armies the squares of the second line covered the gaps between those of the first. The Austrians faced south-east, the Russians south-west, and it was the weakness of the plan of battle that as it was developed, and the Russians moved upon Turgo-Kukuli while the Austrian line was directly towards the wood of Kruingu Meilor and Martinesht, the gap between the two forces must become very much wider. In effect, the Austrians were to march across the base of an equilateral triangle, 2 miles long, while the Russians went round the other two sides. Suvorof accordingly requested his colleague to detach two squares of infantry and four sections of Hussars, under Major-General Karaczay, to occupy this space, and cover his own left flank during the attack on the Turkish advanced post.

This post, about 15,000 strong, held the ridge from Turgo-Kukuli itself to the wood of Kayat. Its right flank was covered by a powerful battery, which swept the whole of the slope to the Ruimna. The front was further protected by a deep gully, which was not at first visible to the Russians, owing to the dense crop of unreaped maize which covered the intervening ground. Coming up in some disorder to this gully, the Russians were attacked from the right by 7000 Turkish horse, carrying infantry behind them on their saddles. The right and centre squares of the first line received the enemy with great steadiness, and beat off two attacks with musketry and artillery fire. The whole force then pushed steadily down into the gully, and began the ascent of the opposite slope.

In the meantime the Austrian main body had come into contact with the Turks to the north-east. The Grand Vizier, seeing, as he could not fail to see, the wide and widening gap between the two allied armies, flung a great mass of cavalry into it. This force immediately split up into two. One, of 16,000 men, fell upon Suvorof's left, at the moment when his first line of squares had crossed the gully and the second had not yet descended into it. The other, of 10,000, was directed upon Coburg's right. Simultaneously 18,000 horse left the Turkish right, plunged through the swamp, and furiously attacked the Austrian left. Each of the Allies was thus subjected to an attack on both flanks at once. The attack on the Austrian left was entangled in a wood, and soon broke up in face of fire from artillery and infantry. That on the Austrian right was more formidable. Coburg remained firm, ordered the flanking square of his second line to face to the right, and sent two squadrons of Hussars to make connection between it and Karaczay's detachment. The square blew away the attack, and Karaczay fell upon the left of the discomfited enemy. Nevertheless, the latter displayed unusual powers of resistance, and Karaczay had to halt and re-form no less than seven times. It was not until the flanking square in the Austrian first line also attacked the enemy's right, that the mellay at last came to an end, and the Turks drew off.

The attack on Suvorof's left was no more successful. The flanking square in his second line was actually broken at more than one spot, but the next square came to its assistance, and the enemy were driven back. Suvorof then ordered these two squares to move slowly after the enemy, supported by the remaining square of the second line and a detachment of Austrian Hussars, while he proceeded with his attack upon the position in front of him. With some difficulty the squares of the second line performed their task. The Turks who

had been driven off from the Austrian right joined with those retreating before the Russian left, and a very savage attack by both together upon the pursuing Russians was not beaten back until Karaczay had once again thrown himself into the fray. From this time the weak spot in the allied line was left untouched by the enemy, and in fact, Suvorof's detached second-line squares and the two squares from Coburg's right, together with Karaczay's force, almost filled the interval. The allied line, therefore, remained almost unbroken, though its right, under Suvorof, was still moving towards Turgo-Kukuli at right angles to the main line of advance. This preliminary operation was soon concluded. The Turks in front of Suvorof, both attacks on his flank having failed, began to draw off in their customary disorder towards the wood of Kayat, leaving all their guns and baggage behind them. Suvorof launched his cavalry in pursuit, and they were chased through the village into the wood, while the infantry occupied their abandoned entrenched camp.

It was now about midday. All the enemy's cavalry attacks had failed, his advanced force in Turgo-Kukuli had been beaten and scattered, and the allied troops were ready for the assault of his main position. Coburg halted his men on the near side of the swampy stream that lay between him and the Turkish trenches, while Suvorof, sending the centre square of his first line into the wood of Kayat, swept round the trees with his main body and drew them up on the far side, facing the enemy. Here he gave them half an hour's rest, and at 1 o'clock marched against the village of Boksa. The interval between the Russian and Austrian troops, as has been already stated, was no longer of great extent. Nevertheless, the same marshy bottom which lay between the Austrians and the Turks also cut between the two sections of the allied army, and along this the Grand Vizier once more despatched a large force of cavalry. As before, this was dispersed by Karaczay and the squares

from Suvorof's second line. In the meantime the squares of the Russian first line marched straight upon Boksa. Arrived within musket shot of the Turkish batteries, which fired for the most part over their heads, the squares halted and returned the artillery fire. The Turkish guns were soon silenced, and the village was cleared with the bayonet. Some of the fugitives ran direct to Martinesht, but the majority fell back on the main position behind them.

The flanking batteries having been taken, the combined attack upon this position was made without delay. Suvorof brought his second-line squares up on the left of those of the first line and, seeing the enemy still at work with pick and shovel, requested Coburg, who was now crossing the marsh, to take the shallow trenches opposite him with cavalry. At the same moment his own horse passed through the intervals between the squares and charged the Turkish left. This unusual method of attack succeeded on the Ruimnik as at Landskron. The scattered Turkish fire did little execution, the horsemen leapt the half-dug trenches, and the artillerymen, standing by their guns as if they had been chained to them, were cut down to a man. The cavalry then dispersed the Turkish horse and fell upon the infantry. Crowded between the wood and the triumphant Allies, the Grand Vizier's 40,000 infantry were unable to disengage themselves or manœuvre, and his superiority in numbers gave him no superiority in strength. In a quarter of an hour after the first cavalry attack, the Russian and Austrian foot were everywhere across the trenches, and plied their bayonets vigorously upon the struggling mass of Janissaries. It was impossible for such a small attacking force to cumber itself with prisoners, and no quarter was given. By 4 o'clock in the afternoon the surging mob was being driven pell-mell into the trees of Kruingu Meilor. The right and left wing squares of the victors passed round the skirts of the wood, and fired heavily into the

flanks of the routed enemy. The Turkish horse fled headlong through Martinesht and got across the Ruimnik, for the most part by swimming. The infantry fared worse. Some climbed trees and concealed themselves in the branches. Others hid among the undergrowth or in holes or gullies. The great mass, ridden down by the remorseless cavalry of the pursuers, scrambled off towards Martinesht, or huddled together in irregular groups and offered a desperate resistance for want of any means of escape. The Grand Vizier himself was dying of malaria, and had hitherto been sitting in a carriage. At this point he dragged himself on to a horse, and holding up a copy of the Koran, begged his troops to stand their ground. But neither these appeals to their religious zeal nor the two guns which he at last turned upon them were of avail. They continued to give back, and he was more than once seen to ride round a group of fugitives, imploring and threatening, until they thrust forcibly by him and ran for the bridge at Martinesht.<sup>1</sup> The breaking up of the huge mob could not be finished in a moment, and almost inert though it was, the utmost efforts of the attackers pushed it but slowly off the ground. The accidental or intentional explosion of a large quantity of their own ammunition completed the demoralisation of the Turks, and their retreat became as nearly a rout as was possible over ground so cumbered with trees, waggons, and corpses. The distance from the edge of the wood to Martinesht was 4 miles, and upon this space it was estimated that no less than 8000 of the enemy lay dead. The flood of panic-stricken fugitives poured on to the bridge, which was already blocked with waggons, horses, oxen, and camels. Escape by this road being hopeless, the multitude flung themselves into the river and hundreds were drowned. The Austrians halted a mile and a half from the town, but Suvorof marched his men right up to the river, and upon the masses

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 85.



on the bridge, on the banks, and in the water itself his infantry poured an unceasing fire. Darkness and fatigue at last put an end to the slaughter, and the remnants of the shattered host were allowed to escape.

The Russians passed the night on the bank of the river. Some light cavalry were sent southwards to clear out the Turks from the neighbouring village of Odaya, and at daybreak Coburg despatched some hussars and a battalion of infantry to beat up the Turks in the wood of Kruingu Meilor. These operations completed one of the most overwhelming victories that Europeans have ever gained over the Turks: a victory which proved, no less incontestably than Kagul, that nothing was required to rid Europe of the Asiatic pest except organisation and energy in following up successes in the field. The Turkish dead alone were reckoned at 15,000, and the small number of 400 prisoners indicated the desperate nature of the fighting. An enormous booty, 100 flags, 6 mortars, 7 heavy and 67 field-guns, horses, oxen, camels, and waggons, the tents and equipment of three entrenched camps, and the great gold and silver cloth pavilion of the Vizier himself fell into the hands of the conquerors.<sup>1</sup> The light horse, following the enemy on the 23rd, 12 miles down the road to the Buzeo, found nothing but dead and wounded men and animals. The great host of 90,000 men was completely dispersed, and only a miserable remnant crossed the Danube.<sup>2</sup>

The behaviour of the Austrian leader after the victory was as generous as before it had been modest. He had adopted Suvorof's plan, and had abandoned the traditional formation of Austrian infantry in favour of the Russian square, and he was not afraid to give Suvorof the credit. "The approval of my arrange-

<sup>1</sup> According to one authority the principal camp was so filthy that one could hardly breathe there (*Campagnes*, ii. 86).

<sup>2</sup> *Campagnes*, ii. 62 *et seq.*; Pyetrof, ii. 58 *et seq.*; *Geschichte des Oesterreich-Russischen und Türkischen Krieges*, 1792, 152 *et seq.*

ments," he wrote, "which you, my unequalled teacher, have expressed, is very gratifying to me, and has increased my confidence in myself." Suworof himself was in the highest of high spirits, and enjoyed to the full the honours which were showered upon him. The Emperor made Coburg a Field Marshal and Suworof a Count of the Empire. Catherine presented each commander with a jewelled sword, and Suworof received in addition the title of Count of the Ruimnik, and the Order of St. Andrew of the First Class with a device studded with diamonds.

The letter which he wrote to Catherine on the 9th November 1789 is in his most overflowing style :

**MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN**—I am delighted by the attention paid to my old services toward your Highness in your Imperial Highness's most gracious order to me of the 18th October. The unlimited, unexpected, and undeserved kindnesses of your Majesty, Great Empress. I am now like a newly enrolled recruit, ready to give up my life for you. When by divine decree it comes to me to take leave of life and my Motherland, I shall have nothing but God and great Catherine ! And bid farewell, your Highness, to the means of my approach to the lowest step of your Highness's throne—my great spirited commander, that great man, Prince Gregory Alexandrovitch [Potyomkin]. May the lustre of this most famous age of your monarchy extend to the last of time ! May your might establish blessings in Europe and the whole world ! In conclusion I venture to fall at the sacred feet of your Imperial Highness and will be with the most spotless zeal and ardour, most Gracious Sovereign, your Imperial Highness's most obedient and most humble

COUNT A. SUWOROF RUIMNIKSKI.

To his daughter he wrote with equal excitement :

**COMTESSE DE DEUX EMPIRES, DARLING NATASHA SUWOROVIE**—A cela, ah ha, you must never be anything but honest, virtuous, and benevolent. Tell Sophia Ivanovna and the sisters that I've a fever in my inside,

and who can prevent it? Have you heard yet, little sister, my soul, of the rescript de ma magnanime mère on a half sheet, as if I were Alexander of Macedon, emblems of the St. Andrew, fifty thousand, aye, and above all, darling, the first Class of the St. George. There's your daddy! It's true I just didn't die of joy. God's blessing on you! <sup>1</sup>

To Major-General de Ribas he wrote, in French, of his delight in Coburg's friendship:

I shall never forget this fine honesty, so rare, perhaps unexampled, of which I am unchangingly sensible, without the least shade of distrust. Our little army lived on brotherly terms and showed its worthiness; duplicity, equivocation, enigmas were strictly forbidden in its ranks.<sup>2</sup>

When all the troops had retired into winter quarters he continued to correspond with Coburg. On the 30th December the latter wrote to him from Bucharest:

The applause of the universe is not so sweet to me as the pleasure of my honourable friend, to whom I owe the greater part of the reputation that I have made.<sup>3</sup>

For the time being Suvorof had everything that he could desire, victory, fame, honours, and distinctions, and the unstinted admiration of a man who could not compete with him in the favour of the Empress. After a quiet winter he looked forward to fresh triumphs and fresh rewards.

He was in the end not disappointed. But he had to wait a long time. The campaign of 1790 began under the threat of political complications, and ended as inconclusively as that of 1789. After the Ruimnik, Potyomkin, by bribery and a show of force, had obtained the surrender of Bendyeri on the Dnyestr, and the Austrians had entered Belgrad. The frontier line of defences was thus effectively pierced, and the road was

<sup>1</sup> *Istoricheskii Vvestnik* (1900), lxxx. 532.

<sup>2</sup> Martchenko, 33.

<sup>3</sup> Schmidt, i.

open for a serious invasion of Turkey. Suvorof drew up an elaborate plan, he himself to cross at Brailof, and Coburg at Zhurzha and Rushtshuk. But the energy of Potyomkin was more than ever paralysed by Prussian intrigues in Poland, and a large part of his army was despatched to watch that frontier. Austria, also, was nervous about Prussia, and, after an unexpected and disastrous failure of Coburg before Zhurzha in April, ceased to take an active part in the war. On the 19th September Coburg signed an armistice, which was ultimately merged in a definite treaty of peace. Suvorof at the time of the armistice was already on his way to join forces with Coburg, and had to retire without delay, to avoid being cut off. The Polish danger and this loss of Austrian help made a thorough defeat of Turkey impossible, though the successful conclusion of the Swedish war in August lessened the strain on the Russian resources. Potyomkin therefore opened negotiations with the Porte at Jassy. By this time Suvorof had done little except occupy Galatz on the Danube, and equip a small fleet of armed boats.

Two letters which he received from Coburg after the conclusion of the Austrian armistice seem to deserve quotation. They serve the purpose of a mirror, reflecting his character as well as expressing that of his correspondent. The first was written immediately after the suspension of hostilities :

No ! my adored teacher ! My complete devotion to you will never be diminished, however space and time may divide us. I hope, dear Prince, that our separation will not be perpetual, and that I shall yet be so happy as to have once more the advantage of your good counsel and example to bear terror and despair among the infidels.<sup>1</sup>

The second was written on the 13th October :

I must leave you on Wednesday next to take up my new command in Hungary. Nothing grieves me so

<sup>1</sup> Pyetrof, ii. 131.

much at my departure as the idea of going still further away from you, my worthy and precious friend !

I have appreciated all your magnanimity. The bonds of our friendship have been formed by events of the greatest importance, and on every occasion I have had to admire you as a hero and to cherish you as a man of the greatest worth.

Judge yourself, my incomparable master, of the sorrow that I experience in separating from a man who has so much claim to my special esteem and attachment. You alone can sweeten the bitterness of my lot by keeping for me the affection with which you have honoured me up to the present, and I protest with all sincerity that the frequent assurance of your friendship is absolutely necessary to my happiness.

I cannot bring myself to say goodbye in person ; it would be too painful for me. Judge of my feelings by your own. I must therefore confine myself to assuring you of my most lively affection. I beg you to continue to show the same to me ; until now it has been the joy of my military career.

In return, my most worthy friend, you may count on my regard without bounds. You will always be the dearest friend that heaven has given me, and no one will ever have as much claim to the high esteem with which, etc.<sup>1</sup>

This is not the language of flattery, but of friendship, and Coburg's letters suggest a quality in Suvorof which is not often to be discovered in his own.

But even letters of this kind could hardly relieve the blackness of Suvorof's outlook. A whole year had been wasted, and it was already almost time to go again into winter quarters. At last Potyomkin, realising that negotiations with Turkey are useless unless words are supported by threats, was roused to the conception of a campaign on the lower Danube. The Turkish fleet on the Black Sea was crippled by Vice-Admiral Ushakof, and with the aid of a river flotilla under Major-General de Ribas, the fortresses of Tultchi and Isaktchi were taken in September. Here the tide stopped, and two

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 106.

armies, under Lieutenant-Generals Samoilof and Pavel Potyomkin, remained passive under the walls of Izmail, until such time as the jealousy of the two Commanders should subside. A vigorous artillery attack was carried on from the boats on the river and some batteries erected on the opposite bank, but it was impossible by this, without the co-operation of the land forces, to do more than shake the defences of the formidable fortress.

The besiegers grew dispirited, and the defenders correspondingly elated. The Russian transport was, as usual, bad, and food supplies ran short. Even officers had sometimes to dine off tea and a little bread, or go without any dinner at all, and the fodder for the horses was very inferior. To a demand for a surrender the Pasha of Izmail replied that he saw nothing to be afraid of.<sup>1</sup> He was quite right. Without a change in the methods of attack, the place would hold out as long as Otchakof, and the besiegers would die in their camps of cold, hunger, and scurvy long before the garrison began to suffer any privations. At last, resolving upon a bold stroke, the elder Potyomkin broke off negotiations with the enemy, and at the beginning of December sent Suworof to take supreme command of all the Russian troops before Izmail, and capture the place at all costs. On the 16th he wrote :

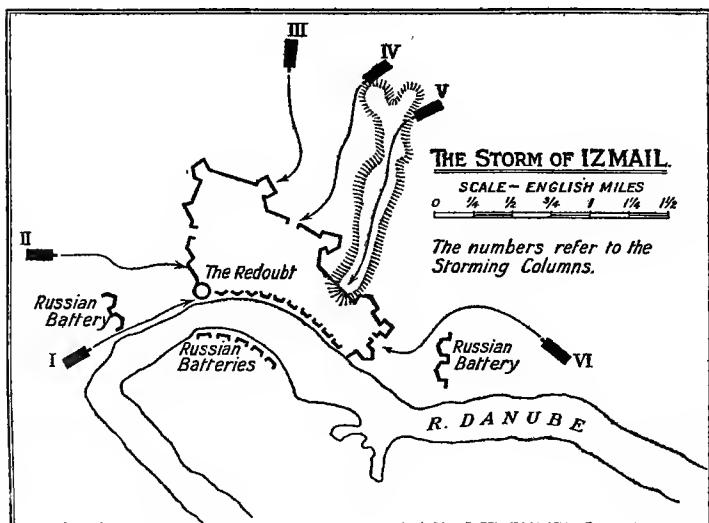
My hope is in God and your bravery. According to my orders to you, your presence on the spot will unite all parties. There are many generals there of equal rank, everywhere the cause of a sort of nest of indecision. Survey and arrange everything. Pray God and set to work. There are weak spots, if only you go together.<sup>2</sup>

Suworof had offended Potyomkin at Otchakof. But he remained the indispensable tool of his ambition. Samoilof and the other Potyomkin had just determined to abandon the enterprise. On the 13th Suworof arrived

<sup>1</sup> Letters of Count Tchernishef ; *Russ. Arkh.* (1871), 385 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1876), 640.

at the place, turning back some detachments which were already on their way, "in devilish wind and snow,"<sup>1</sup> into winter quarters. He at once, after reconnoitring the ground, resolved upon a storm. In August 1789 Prince Ryepnin had reached Izmail and severely battered the walls with his field artillery. But he also had shrunk from ordering a storm, and the second withdrawal of a Russian army had increased the confidence of the



garrison. It made no difference to that of Suvorof. It was too late to begin a siege, and a storm was inevitable.

The fortress of Izmail was a bastion of the Dobrudzha, projecting into Bessarabia on some hard ground among the swamps and lakes of the northern bank of the lower Danube. It formed an irregular quadrilateral, of which the southern side, a mile and a quarter long, was formed by the river bank. The western face ran at right angles from the river for a distance of about

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Arkh.* (1871), 398.

1600 yards. The eastern face was about 1100 yards long. Except along the river front, the whole was surrounded by a strong wall of earth, varying in height from 20 to 30 feet, and a ditch 40 feet wide and, in some parts, 28 feet deep. At the river end of the western wall stood a great two-storied redoubt of stone, and at intervals along the wall were projecting bastions. The river-side had no wall, but it was defended by ten batteries, mounting 85 guns and 15 mortars, and a large fleet of armed boats of various sizes. The whole perimeter of the place was about four miles and around it were disposed 200 guns. On the western side there were two gates, and on the northern and eastern one each. The garrison of 35,000 men, amply supplied with ammunition and foodstuffs, could reasonably expect to hold it against any but a greatly superior force, equipped with a complete siege train.

Against this formidable place Suvorof brought some 30,000 men, nearly half of them Cossacks armed with long lances, and no siege artillery at all. The only possible method of taking it was a storm, and the prospects of a successful attempt at storming a fortress, surrounded by lofty walls and defended by forces superior in numbers to those of the attack, were very poor. But this was not the first occasion on which Suvorof had violated rules in dealing with the Turks, and he delayed not an hour in beginning his preparations. Nevertheless, he warned Potyomkin that failure was possible. On the 14th he wrote that the field artillery had very little ammunition. "I cannot promise, God is wroth, and mercy depends on His Providence. The generals and troops burn with zeal for the service."<sup>1</sup> To the enemy he showed a confident front. At 2 o'clock on the 18th he sent in to the Turkish Commander Potyomkin's letter, which had arrived before him, demanding the surrender of the town, and he added a brief note of his own.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Orlof, *Shturm Izmaila*, 42.



To the Seraskir, chiefs, and all people—I have come here with troops. Twenty-four hours for deliberation—free choice; my first volley—free choice no more; storm is death. This I leave to your consideration.

Then he set his men to work cutting timber for ladders and fascines, and throwing up two batteries, 400 yards from the river end of each of the eastern and western walls. These batteries were armed with 40 12-pounder guns, the largest available. The Seraskir delayed his reply till the evening of the 19th, but the officer who received Suvorof's letter told the Russian who brought it that the Danube would stand still in its course and heaven fall to earth before Izmail would be surrendered.<sup>1</sup> The formal answer was less defiant. Calling with Prussian fervour upon the name of God, the Turk protested that he and his men would die rather than surrender. Nevertheless, if Suvorof would wait ten days, he was ready to communicate with the Grand Vizier on the subject. Suvorof thereupon, by way of complying with the regulations, called a council of war. The youngest officer present, the Cossack brigadier Platof, cried out "Storm!" and there was no dissent. The 22nd was fixed for the attempt, and with his usual bold confidence in his troops, Suvorof directed that they should be informed of the strength of the place, the numbers of the garrison, its guns, and all the difficulties that lay before them.

An eye-witness thus described him as he rode among his men:

He was not tall, he had a big mouth, his face was not altogether pleasant; but his glance was fiery, quick and unusually penetrating; his whole forehead was covered with wrinkles, and no wrinkles could be so eloquent; on his head, grey with age and the work of war, only a few hairs were left.

Jack boots, badly polished, badly sewn, broad top flaps above the knee, trousers, underclothing of white

<sup>1</sup> Orlof.

dimity, shirt of the same material, with yellow nankeen or linen facings, lapels and collar; white waistcoat, little hat with yellow brim, such was the uniform of the hero of the Ruimnik at all seasons of the year; attire the more strange that sometimes, on account of two old wounds in the knee and the leg, which greatly bothered him, he was compelled to wear a boot on one leg and a slipper on the other. If the cold was extraordinary he put on a cloth shirt of the same material and colour. As a rule he wore only his order of St. Andrew, but on important occasions he put them all on.<sup>1</sup>

"There," he declared, "is the fortress. Its walls are high, its ditches deep, but we must take it. Our Empress Mother has ordered it and we must obey her." "With you we'll take it," they replied.<sup>2</sup> Officers and men, in spite of the long delay, the bad weather, and the deficiency of supplies, were worked up to the highest point of resolution by the presence of Suworof. Many volunteers and foreigners were on the spot, and asked for posts in the storming parties. In the result there was an unusual proportion of officers engaged in the attack. Colonels commanded battalions instead of regiments, some had under them only a few score sharpshooters, and others marched with the columns without any command at all. All were eager to share in the inevitable success of the enterprise.<sup>3</sup>

At dawn on the 21st the batteries and the armed boats in the river opened fire, and the 40 heavy guns on the land and the 567 light guns on the water poured a hail of shot of all sizes upon the walls and batteries. The Turks at first replied vigorously, and a Russian

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Invalid.* (1827).

<sup>2</sup> Schmidt.

<sup>3</sup> *Russ. Arkh.* (1876). The best-known names among those of the foreign volunteers are De Ribas, Richelieu, and Langeron of the French, and the Prince de Ligne of the Austrians. A Russian volunteer thus refers to the French: "They are all, like true Frenchmen, delightful but frivolous people, gay dogs, and feather-pated" (*Russ. Arkh.* (1871), 394). A variation of the English convention: "a gay and polite people, fond of dancing and light wines."

brigantine was blown up and lost with her crew of 200 men. But the Russian artillery as usual was superior to the Turkish, and the latter was eventually silenced. The Russian fire continued until past midnight on the morning of the 22nd. At 3 o'clock the guns ceased, and a rocket gave the signal for the assembly of the storming columns. At half-past 5, shrouded in mist, they moved in silence towards the walls.

Six points had been selected for the land attacks, and three for boat landings. Two columns attacked the western face, three the northern, and one the eastern, and only the western and eastern faces had been previously battered by artillery. Two of the northern columns, the fourth and the fifth, were faced with tasks of frightful difficulty. They were composed of dismounted Cossacks armed with long pikes, the most unsuitable of all weapons for close fighting against swordsmen like the Turks ; and there was no opening of any sort in the wall before them except the Bendyeri gate. The fifth column, also, had to descend into the miry gully which divided the fortress into two parts, called the Old Fortress and the New, and climb the unbreached wall which ran across it. The third column found its forty-foot ladders too short, and had to tie two together before any man could reach the top of the wall. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the first successes occurred on the eastern and western sides.

The enemy had been warned by deserters, and some of the columns were seen as they approached the ditch. But one moved quietly through the mist, guided by the faint glimmer of the stonework of a bastion, passed a watch-dog chained on the near side of the ditch, and got on to the wall before the drowsy and confident defenders opened fire. The first and second columns were seen as they approached from the west, and were received with a torrent of musketry and artillery fire. The marksmen attached to each column scattered along

the edge of the ditch and opened fire upon the Turks on the wall, while the main bodies pushed boldly forward. The great redoubt near the river's edge was an insurmountable obstacle, and the first column, under Major-General Lvof, passing right under its walls, rushed at the palisade which connected it with the first of the shore batteries. The timber was climbed or beaten down, and the nearest batteries were taken with the bayonet. A violent sortie from the redoubt was driven in, and Lvof, who had been the first man over the palisade, led part of his column round the inside of the redoubt towards the nearest, or Brosskii Gate. He and his second in command were wounded, but the troops pressed on, burst open the gate, and went on to the second, or Khotin Gate. Here they joined forces with the second column under Major-General Lassii. These troops had scrambled over the wall of a lunette to the north of the first gate, and were now driving the enemy before them into the town. Through the opened gates the reserves poured into the fortress, and on the western side the most difficult part of the Russian task had been performed.

The sixth column, under Major-General Kutuzof,<sup>1</sup> was the next to get a footing within the walls. It carried the bastion opposite the Russian battery, but the defenders received reinforcements, and a stubborn fight on the wall was only decided by the arrival of the Russian reserves. The victors then pushed on towards the north. In the meantime the flotilla under Major-General de Ribas had discharged its landing parties among the shore batteries, and a junction was soon effected with Kutuzof. Three sides of the fortress were now in Russian hands, though the Turks continued to resist fiercely among the neighbouring buildings.

The columns which attacked from the north, without artillery preparation, had, as was to be expected, met

<sup>1</sup> Later famous as the conqueror of Napoleon, and later still, more famous yet as the autocthonous hero of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

with less success. The third, attacking the north-eastern angle, spliced its ladders together under fire, and not until all its reserves were brought up did it succeed in getting a firm footing on the wall. There it divided and advanced to right and left, pushing the Turks before it. The fourth column attacked to the east of the Bendyeri Gate, and was actually cut in half by a furious sally. The pikes of the unfortunate Cossacks were deadly when their bearers were on horseback, but even when shortened to five feet, they were almost useless encumbrances when the bearers were dismounted, and they proved a feeble defence against the scimitars of the raging Janissaries. For some bloody minutes the latter stormed with impunity among their adversaries. The column was saved by the timely arrival of some squadrons of horse, and the diversion provided by the success of the fifth column, further to the east, enabled the Cossacks at last to mount the obstacle in front of them and join hands with their comrades. The fifth column itself had also suffered greatly. The final rush was led by Trophim Kutkinskii, a regimental priest, who was himself hit three times, two of the bullets rebounding from his cross. After a fierce struggle the fifth column joined with the fourth and sixth, and the circle about the doomed Turks was complete. It was now about 8 o'clock.

There followed a ferocious combat, into and through the streets of the town. The Turks fought like trapped animals, and the Russians spared none. Every house and garden became a fortress in miniature, and the large khans or inns, stone buildings surrounding courtyards, were especially formidable. One after another these were battered to pieces by artillery, or taken with the bayonet, and every one of the defenders was killed. The cordon drew closer. A few isolated buildings held out, notably a great khan near the western redoubt, where Aidos-Mekhmet himself with 2000 men and a few guns continued to resist. But the process of hunting

out and killing went on steadily, and only fatigue compelled the Russians at last in some cases to give quarter. The Turkish Commander finally offered to surrender, and was permitted to evacuate his stronghold. Unhappily, one of his Janissaries fired a pistol and killed the Russian officer who was superintending the disarming of the prisoners, and all of them, including Aidos-Mekhmet, were killed on the spot.<sup>1</sup> In the great redoubt and a few other strong places, which held out until the Russians were exhausted with killing, the garrisons were taken alive. In all, 9000 Turks were made prisoners. By 11 o'clock all was over. A few of the defenders may have escaped. A few more may have succeeded in concealing themselves in the town. But of the whole garrison of 35,000 men, not less than 25,000 must have been killed. That is to say, the Russian troops, after storming formidable defences, in sheer hand-to-hand fighting had killed a number of Turks equal to that of their own entire force. Such a feat of arms is almost without a parallel in history. The sequel was as horrible as the storm itself. The garrison were the instruments of the most slovenly tyranny that ever abused a conquered province. But the inhabitants of the town were not all Turks, and many of them were better disposed towards the Russians than towards the defenders. Nevertheless, the town was sacked, and every form of violence was committed against these wretched people. An enormous booty was obtained, and three days of unlimited licence, in accordance with military custom, compensated the victorious soldiery for their fatigues.<sup>2</sup> The private

<sup>1</sup> The facts are in dispute. Some authorities say that a Russian snatched at the Turkish leader's jewelled dagger, and that the Janissary, firing at him, killed the officer instead ; others that an Englishman named Foot, an officer in the Russian flotilla, tried to seize Aidos-Mekhmet, who himself killed his assailant.

<sup>2</sup> English readers should perhaps be reminded that Wellington's troops in the Peninsula enjoyed the same licence. At Badajoz, Ciudad Rodrigo, and San Sebastian the Spanish inhabitants suffered every atrocity at the hands of the English, who had come to save them from

plunder could not be reckoned. But 265 guns, 100,000 pounds of powder, 20,000 shells, 400 flags, and 52 ships and boats were included in the official lists. The price was officially estimated at 1815 killed and 2400 wounded. But this was mere guess-work, and it would be safe to assert that 400 officers and 9000 men were either killed or wounded.<sup>1</sup> Six days were occupied in carrying away the dead. The Russians were buried, the Turks were flung into the river. The losses in officers had been very heavy during the attacks upon the wall, and it says much for the gallantry of those who led the stormers that, out of the original commanders and their substitutes, five were wounded and one killed.<sup>1</sup>

For ten days after this sensational feat Suvorof remained in the neighbourhood of Izmail. Then he went to Jassy, where Potyomkin, full of self-satisfaction and good-will, prepared a triumphal reception. The streets were decorated, and an adjutant was posted at a window, to give warning to Potyomkin of Suvorof's approach. Accidentally or of set purpose, the conqueror of Izmail entered Jassy by night, and lodged with an old acquaintance, the Prefect of the Police. The next morning, he set out for Potyomkin's residence in the Prefect's old-fashioned carriage, with two men on the footboard. The officer on the watch informed Potyomkin, but Suvorof was too quick, leapt up the staircase, and encountered the grandee, hurrying forward with the effusive readiness of a patron, almost at the top of the staircase. They embraced each other. "With

the French. Nevertheless, one aspect of the sacking of Izmail is original. Suvorof permitted the officers to keep for themselves any of the prisoners whom they pleased, of either sex, on a written promise to feed and lodge them and treat them humanely (*Campagnes*, ii. 146). The share of the Prince de Ligne included valuable weapons, Arab horses, and twelve Turkish musicians. *Russ. Star.* (1892), lxxiii. 572.

<sup>1</sup> *Campagnes*, ii. 109 *et seq.*; Pyetrof, ii. 165 *et seq.*; "Memoirs of Denisof" in *Russ. Star.* (1874); Prince de Ligne, *Œuvres Militaires*, xiii.; Orlof, *Shturm Izmaila*. A facsimile of Suvorof's MS. report is in the Warsaw *Shornik*. A vivid personal account of the storm is in the *Russ. Arkh.* (1905), i. 138.

what can I reward your services, Count Alexander Vassilyevitch ? ” exclaimed Potyomkin. Suvorof drew back, and harshly replied, “ With nothing, Prince. I am not a merchant, and have not come here to trade. No one can reward me but God and the Empress.” Potyomkin was visibly taken aback, and accepted Suvorof’s written report with a few formal words. They never met again on friendly terms, and Suvorof lost his most powerful advocate before the Empress, at the time when he most needed a shield against the darts of professional jealousy.<sup>1</sup>

His conduct was highly impolitic, if not unnatural. Potyomkin’s admiration was probably genuine, and he had certainly every reason to be grateful to Suvorof. He himself could only hope for that sort of greatness which consists in being the acknowledged patron of those whose own greatness is apparent to the world. Like Louis XIV., he could shine only by the reflection of the glory of his ministers. He was accordingly generous so long as he did not see in his famous subordinate a potential rival. His goodwill towards Suvorof was probably less likely to be affected by jealousy, because from such an abrupt, fantastic, and untactful man he had no reason to fear rivalry in the Court itself, the only field in which he was really, in the last resort, afraid of rivalry. He could therefore afford to give full play to his willingness to please, and if he was the self-conscious favourite of the Empress, he was none the less the man who had given Suvorof the opportunity of taking Izmail, and might without impropriety claim the privilege of rewarding him. But Suvorof on his side was inflated with victory. He had done something that no man had ever done before, and felt that he could now at last stand on his own feet. Potyomkin was immeasurably his inferior as a soldier, and had first left him in the lurch at Otchakof, and then rebuked him for insubordination. He now needed him no more,

<sup>1</sup> *Suin Otyetchestva* (1849).



and his present arrogance was proportioned to his past humility.

The consequences of his rebuff to Potyomkin were immediate. The latter wrote to Catherine to recommend Suvorof for promotion: "Since out of all the Generals-in-Chief, he alone has been on active service throughout the campaign, and, so to speak, has saved our Allies, because the enemy, seeing our approach, never dared to attack them, would it not be gracious to distinguish him by the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel of the Guards or General Adjutant?"<sup>1</sup> The Empress agreed, ordered a special medal to be struck, and made Suvorof Lieutenant-Colonel of the Pryeobrazhenski Guards, of which she herself was Colonel. This distinction, often bestowed upon Generals whose services had been terminated by their increasing years, gave no special gratification to Suvorof. Potyomkin, once repelled, was not inclined to give him further assistance, and neither the post of General Adjutant nor the coveted rank of Field Marshal was offered to him. There were ten other Lieutenant-Colonels of the Guards having precedence over him, and he had the additional grievance of seeing a mere favourite like Potyomkin himself rewarded with an obelisk at Tsarskoe Syelo, a Field Marshal's uniform sewn with brilliants, and 200,000 roubles in money.

He had not even the reward of seeing his Empress reap the fruits of his victories. Her original plan was to create out of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Bessarabia a Christian State, of which her grandson Constantine was to be the first Prince. But the Emperor Leopold, who had succeeded Joseph on the throne of Austria in 1790, if he could not win victories for himself, was at least determined that his more skilful neighbours should not profit by theirs. At the Congress of Reichenbach he joined with the King of Prussia and William Pitt in demanding that Catherine should surrender all her

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1876), 643. The rank of General Adjutant carried with it the right of personal access to the Empress at any time.

conquests. The Empress agreed to give up all except Otchakof and the empty tracts as far as the Dnyestr. Even for this she was for a time threatened with war, and Pitt displayed great energy in the name of the Balance of Power. But the Empress held out, and the combination against her had to be content with the surrender of all the populated country which the Russian armies had won. Thus all Suworof's work was undone for the second time. And thus began the long duel between the democracy and the despotism: Russia, for selfish and material ends, for ever working out the Divine purpose, and Great Britain, the champion of nationality and constitutional government, for ever thrusting the persecuted subjects of the Porte back into the hands of their cruel, corrupt, and slovenly oppressors.

## CHAPTER VI

### KICKING HIS HEELS

Suvorof at Petersburg—Sent to Finland—Correspondence—Jealousy—  
On military hospitals—Craving for work—Daily life—His daughter  
—Books and newspapers—Ossian—Enjoys a wedding—Trans-  
ferred to Kherson—Troubles with contractors and the Treasury—  
Hospitals again—Letter to a godson—A French war threatened.

AFTER leaving Moldavia, Suvorof spent three months in Petersburg. During that time he contrived to offend not a few persons whom he might well have left alone. He did not conceal his contempt for his equals in rank, though, in fact, some of them were far from incompetent. "Is it true," asked one of them, "that you don't think much of tactics?" "Of course," sneered Suvorof, "I don't know anything of tactics; but tactics know me; as for yourself, you seem to know nothing of either tactics or practics." Of Kutuzof he declared that he was "a clever man whom even Ribas could not deceive"; and in a comparison of himself with Kamyenski and Saltikof, he said that "Kamyenski knows all about war, but war knows nothing of him; I don't know anything about war, but war knows a good deal about me; and as for Saltikof, he knows nothing of war, and war knows nothing of him."<sup>1</sup> Suvorof in fact was thoroughly unhappy. He was useless as a courtier, and while he avoided the dangerous paths of political intrigue, his boredom found expression in

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt, ii. 7, 8.

unwise gibes and sneers against persons whose accumulated antipathies did him nothing but harm.

He wrote in one letter :

Here the mornings bore me, and the evenings give me a headache ; the change of climate and life. Here the language and manners are strange to me ; I can make mistakes in them ; so my situation isn't uniform—now tedious, now gratifying. In this short time it's too late for me to learn field sports, which I have never learned up to now. All this is pastime, not active service ; between stupidity and hell I see no difference. There can't be any contempt for me, I'm an honest man. God will pay me. Malicious chatter, even for the occasional quenching of my thirst—they know that it's more restrained with me than with the others. My excursions are short ; if any obstacles, there won't be even those.<sup>1</sup>

And in another :

Time is short, the end approaches, worn out, six years, and the juice will be squeezed out of the lemon !<sup>2</sup>

A change of scene was provided for him by Potyomkin. The latter had decided to give a magnificent entertainment to the Empress on the 9th May. His health was already beginning to break down, and Platon Zubof had already supplanted him in the favour of Catherine. But he determined that he should set in a blaze of glory, and this last display of his, to celebrate the triumphant conclusion of the Turkish War, was to be the most magnificent of all. One thing alone would mar his own enjoyment : the presence of the man to whom his fame was actually due. At all costs, Suworof must not be on the spot to be shown with the finger, the victor of the Ruimnik and the hero of the Storm of Izmail. A few days before the great holiday, the Empress sent for

<sup>1</sup> *Vorontsof Archives*, xxiv. ; *Journal of Khraponski*, 26th April–7th May 1791.

<sup>2</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1875), iii. 242.

Suvorof, and told him that he was urgently needed in Finland. Two days later he wrote to her from Viborg:

**MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN**—I am in Finland and waiting for your orders.

The answer was a rescript ordering him to survey the frontier and decide what points should be fortified to strengthen it against Sweden.<sup>1</sup>

In his new field of action Suvorof spent eighteen months. In that time, besides strengthening existing works, he erected a new bastion at Neuschlott, redoubts on the Kyumen Parta and at Utti, forts at Ostinoi and Likola, and at Rotchensalm on the mainland and the neighbouring islands a complete fortress. In all, his new works in the last place mounted 900 guns. The last was a very thorough piece of work, and Catherine declared that he had presented her with a new port.<sup>2</sup> This sort of occupation, though it was within his capacity, was not to his taste. He was primarily a leader of men, and he devoted himself with his usual energy to the improvement of the condition of the troops under his command. These, as was the rule with Russian frontier troops, were in a bad state. There was constant disease with a high rate of mortality, and desertions were frequent.

He began his special system of marches and sham fights, and apparently made a considerable improvement. But work brought him no repose. Other officers were nearer the fountain of honour than he, and were promoted while he retained his old rank. War was threatening from the direction of France, and he was not asked to take the command. Even his work with the troops brought complaints of his severity, and echoes of these reached him from Petersburg. His protests were poured into his correspondence with friends and acquaintances in the capital. He was an inveterate

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1900), civ. 546.

<sup>2</sup> *Campagnes*, ii. 150, 151.

letter-writer, and very many of his letters from Finland have been preserved. They display, among other things, his vanity, jealousy, and sensitiveness to criticism at their worst. The principal recipient of these cries of resentment was Dmitri Ivanovitch Khvostof, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the army and the husband of Suworof's niece.<sup>1</sup> He was a diligent reporter of all the gossip of Petersburg, and in return received the long succession of his relative's protests. The earliest of these were harpings on old strings: want of recognition of the Storm of Izmail, resentment against Potyomkin, and the favour shown to his rivals. Later he passed to the pettiness of his work in Finland, and the suggestions that he was overtaxing the strength of his troops, showing indifference to their health, and the like.<sup>2</sup>

Thus on the 8th August 1791 he writes to Khvostof:

Report unpleasantly minimizes the victory of P.N.V.R.<sup>3</sup> There was no overthrow. The army beats the Vizier, and he's generalissimus.

And in the same month he sneers at another competitor:

C.N.I.S. [Count Nikolai Saltikof] somewhat fortified, temporarily and locally, by me and my zeal, now exchanges that driving force for *petits intérêts*.

Of Rumyantzof almost alone he writes with respect:

I praise the talents of Count Peter Alexandrovitch [Rumyantzof]. He picks me out, I acknowledge that.

<sup>1</sup> Agrippina, daughter of Suworof's sister Anna, who had married Prince Gortchakof of Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> These letters are in the *Sbornik*. Many of them are printed in Schmidt's second volume, the *Vorontsof Archives, Russkaya Starina* (1872) and elsewhere. Some are dashed off in such a style as to be incomprehensible—even to Russians.

<sup>3</sup> Prince Ryepnin's victory over the Turks at Matchin. It was the final blow to the Turks, and immediately afterwards Ryepnin signed a provisional treaty of peace. Ryepnin was a very good soldier of the formal school, an aristocrat, and a courtier. All three things made him obnoxious to Suworof.

But he wouldn't have liked my winter weather, because he'd have thought it dangerous to our success. . . . I showed that I alone would be strong enough all through, but look at all that gang and you'll be bound to acknowledge that I was alone and insufficient.

Then on the 21st November he breaks out about Izmail :

The Izmail disgrace has not dropped out of my mind. How long a mere general-adjutancy drags about from Herod to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod ; it's possible to promise and put it off till the peace, till the next war, till the next peace ; the object's postponement—if the barbarians had surrendered by capitulation that's little, but by storm's life and reputation . . . Izmail and the consequences of my device ; the general who took Anapa,<sup>1</sup> at every step the same dispositions, and wisely too. The Matchin muddle was a toad to a bull compared with the Ruimnik.

Consider how I've to cut off from the part I first played in active military service, to which I've been accustomed for almost as many years as you've been in this world ; cast about, and you'll find this is the truth and not vanity, though often I seem at first sight to have been a mere scene-shifter. In 1774, when I was a Major-General, I set the whole great machine in motion, from that came Kozludzhi, and from that Kainardzhi ; so before and after ; even in the Prussian War as a Lieutenant-Colonel I had the same column as my General, but with better success. Am I to amputate the man I am by nature, and make him a mere phantom ? On the Volga I gave orders to 100,000 ; in the South and the Crimea, to 80,000. What magnificence have I here with a dozen battalions ! When they gave a better army to Kakhovski without any trouble at all. He never was to be compared with me in command.

In the same month of November he passes in review a whole series of rivals :

Elmpt was taken as a Captain from a foreign army ; I was a sergeant in the Guards. Prince Yurii

<sup>1</sup> A fortress in Asia Minor, taken by Gudovitch on the 3rd July 1791.

Dolgoruki entered the service at the same time as myself, but he had been enrolled as a child in the cradle. I am senior to all the others in years and service; they were still subalterns when I was already a senior Major; but they have all pushed past me; Count Bruce, as Adjutant of the Guards; Ivan Petrovitch Saltikof, with the title of Kammer-Junker and as the messenger of the victory near Frankfort [Kunersdorf]; Nikolai Ivanovitch Saltikof, with the title of Quartermaster-General and as the bearer of flags taken at Frankfort; Ryepnin, as Adjutant of the Guards; Kamyenski, as Quartermaster and in the artillery; Mushin Pushkin; Yurii Dolgoruki, they were all subalterns, when I was already a Staff Officer.

Then again :

The exploit of my part of the army at Kozludzhi (my comrade ran away) with an enormous force, sworn to the service of the Sherif of the Sandzhak, was better than the affair at Matchin, 100 standards taken against 15 there: there they were working with the men of the Ruimnik and Izmail, but the cavalry was beaten, because it stood on air. It's not myself that's speaking—the advantage of the service; I've long forgotten myself.

The sophism of seniority on the list: I'm to be under his yoke; to be the ape's cat's-paw or the owl in the cage; would not utter annihilation be better?

Peace was made with Turkey early in January, 1792, and in the spring he was thinking of retiring:

I shall definitely end in the autumn . . . through work and sleeplessness I've lost chest, throat, stomach, and I'm weak besides from discontent.

On the 20th July he wrote:

My three settled intentions are: retirement, travel, or foreign service. For the two last I should need 10,000 roubles in cash all at once.

But the affairs of Poland were again nearing a crisis, and immediately after this very definite proposal to



stire, he wrote direct to Catherine to ask for a command. The Empress replied on the 27th July that there was no need for the services of such a man as Suvorof, and he fell back again upon his petty worries.<sup>1</sup> Three days later he began again to Khvostof:

My eyes are very painful, I'm in weak health . . . thoroughly bored with writing about these matters, and without necessity I shan't. The will of God and the Mother of her country be done. The mortal remembers death; it is not far from me; this 22nd October I shall have been fifty years in the service; wouldn't it be better to end my unspoilt career then? Fly from the world to some village where I should have enough to keep myself with 1000 roubles a year, and prepare my soul for the passage?

About this time he began to turn his attention to the charges that he was too hard on his men, wore them out by excessive marching, turned them out of hospitals when they were sick, and so caused disaffection and desertion.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, he was always very careful of his men, spared his raw troops the hard work that he required from his veterans, and he only kept the sick out of hospitals because he regarded these places, with much reason, as death-traps. The complaints probably originated with the subordinate officers, who had been accustomed to make irregular gains out of sickness and mortality, and were punished by him if the sickness in their units rose above a certain proportion.<sup>3</sup> His defence against these charges he made to the authorities, not confining himself to protests to Khvostof. Thus he wrote to Count Nikolai Ivanovitch Saltikof:

<sup>1</sup> See the letter from Turtchaninof, Secretary of State, set out in Schmidt, ii. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Masson, in his *Mémoires Secrets sur la Russie*, i. 316, caricatures Suvorof as rushing through the wards crying out, "I'm a doctor!" administering rhubarb and salts, and turning the sick men out into the open, saying that Suvorof's men were not allowed to be ill.

<sup>3</sup> See his instructions to his troops at Kinburn, published in Pyetref, *Second Turkish War*, ii. Appendix 8.

The hospitals have long been foully misused; I haven't suffered it to continue. Regimental and company commanders, instead of caring for the health of the soldiers, often send them to them from long distances, and even without investigating their complaints, and often, through this method of transport, they arrive half-dead among the pestilential exhalations of the dying. "Minerals and Ingredients," but no sense! . . . I have herbal remedies in the stores. One of the doctors has in his own hands a hundred or more, but without trained people in charge. When I took up the command of the troops in Finland at the beginning of this year the Friederichsham and Kyumen [hospitals] had a thousand men in them. In the first months the losses were reduced, and afterwards there were only four diseases left in them: Consumption, Dropsy, Stone and Venereal, and epilepsy for observation. On my departure there were in Friederichsham on sick leave from the Nevski Regiment about 40 men; a few others in the regimental hospitals. My strict attention to the health of the soldiers has made egoism my enemy.

Scurvy! Nonsense! . . . There is no scurvy in Finland, though there may be extraordinary outbreaks even with me, as of other diseases. By means of cabbage, tobacco, and horse-radish scurvy has been stopped, and by cleanliness, too. By the word "Transformation" I understand "evacuation by philanthropic sanitation." With me it's from sick to weak, from weak to convalescent, from that to fresh air, and from that straight to the ranks; in the end in the ranks themselves we get little by little to no need of any sickness at all.

Suvorof was in fact making experiments in preventive medicine. Feed your men, clothe your men, keep your men active, and you will have no diseases except those which were and are still peculiarly incident to military conditions of life. After leaving Finland he published his ideas about hygiene, and if they do not all stand the test of modern science, they are a proof of a very sound untrained judgement.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *post*, p. 146.

He went on to contrast his record with that of Count Ivan Petrovitch Saltikof, his predecessor in Finland, and the cousin of his correspondent.

In his time there was one day when he had more men run across the frontier, or as many, as I had in 10 months, 500 men. My runaways by discharge were less than 300 ; he had 700 in the Pskof Regiment alone. I couldn't examine the previous year, the time of Bruce and Herman, in detail. The latter founded the Kyumen hospital, where they died at the rate of 50 men a week.

As for forced marches, he wrote to Count Ivan Saltikof :

At the beginning of the first war, from Ladoga to Smolyensk, in mud and sleet, one dead and half a dozen weak ; on the scramble over the Ural Steppe, backwards and forwards, not one dead ; with my corps beyond Kuban and Laba from Kopuil, one dead ; beyond the Danube with my Corps in the first war up to Kozludzhi, not one dead ; and in Izmail I did found a hospital. . . . In conclusion, to show you how the hospitals cured the men in the Tauris [Crimea], the contractors offered me a bribe of 7000 roubles to establish them again.

The contractors in fact made money out of full hospitals, and nothing out of empty hospitals. So the regimental officers profited by a high mortality among the troops. They kept the dead soldiers on their books, as political agents have been known to keep dead voters on the register, and drew their pay and allowances for their own benefit. Infected buildings helped the purveyors and the officers more than the soldiers for whom they were intended, and Suvorof was determined to reduce their number.

On all these points the right was unquestionably with him. But he was not content with being right. He wanted to be praised for being right, and he continued to crave for some employment which would take him out of reach of gossip, and at the same time keep

him hard at work. His torment of spirit went on almost uninterruptedly, and Khvostof, diligent though he was, could never satisfy the impatient old man with his reports of the intrigues, rumours, and facts which he came across in Petersburg. Tortured though he was by every hint of neglect or supersession, Suworof craved always for more information.

I write to you every day ; or every twenty-four hours, mixing night and day in my anxiety. By not writing, when you have many couriers, you leave me in torturing bewilderment . . . write much more often.

At last he began to write direct to influential men in Petersburg. On the 30th July he wrote to Platon Zubof, the new favourite :

Here I shall soon finish ; let another man finish the second class fortresses. Your Excellency knows what I thirst for : it is not a jealous thirst for honour or searching for rewards, I am bestrewn with them, but it is my old habit of fifty years which drives me where, with any sort of troops, I may pour out the rest of my blood on the altar of the mother of her country. Trusting to your favour, I have the honour, etc.

He even abused his unfortunate nephew for not taking more pains to press his appeals.

You were at Turtchaninof's house, and you didn't bring back the damned rogue's letters. If you didn't find him at home, you should have waited, even if it was for more than 24 hours. . . .

Name at once everybody from whom you pass on anything you've heard ; if anyone tells you anything as a secret, he's so much the more a traitor. . . .

I want to know bad news and not good, because pleasant things betray themselves, unpleasant things are indicated for precaution's sake ; better prevention than consolation ; waiting for something to turn up puts one's neck in the noose ; don't stand wheedling, better endure gruffness ; distinguish real goodwill from the fox's or sheep's skin of the sham ; distinguish always

the right stuff from table talk ; beware of pauses, they're spies ; don't begin a new subject before you've finished the first, don't answer an oak with a cedar, or a rose with a lily.

The rumours of impending service grew at last more definite, but his distress continued :

The rumours here send me, one to Kuban ; another to the Caucasus, a third to Kherson as far as Otchakof. . . .

Before I had against me the devil P.G.A. [Prince Gregory Alexandrovitch Potyomkin] but with fits of benevolence ;<sup>1</sup> now there are 7 devils ; Lucifer Martinett, Asmodeus the pious, Astarot Ivan Ts—, with other devils without number. . . .

Without money, without farm and garden, without carriage and livery, without banqueting, and without friends and without fame ; I am equal to none—need I desire to be equal to any ? Without wealth I got myself a name—judge—equal to none.

Then on the 27th September a final appeal to Bezborodko :

Your Excellency, remember your kindness to me, which I shall feel to my death, renew them ! Do not hand me over to my detractors, I don't interfere with them, I abound in the kindnesses of our Great Monarch although already in the second half century of my service to her. Don't exile me in preparations for remote contingencies. I'm not a stage-carpenter soldier. Another man will easily finish here.

You're a Minister ! Work threatens from France ; the number of troops is an imposing pretence ; I have fought and conquered, with 500 against 5000, ten times our strength, and Gauls are not Prussians. . . . In my gloom I remain, etc.

His old friend Coburg was already in command of the army in Flanders, and he hoped to march against the same enemy. Failing that, the French were intriguing in Turkey, and the second best place would be the South. For the moment he got nothing from

<sup>1</sup> Potyomkin died in October 1791.

Bezborodko, but on the 21st November came an Imperial rescript, ordering him to take up a new command in the South, and his dissatisfaction was for the time being dispelled.

It must not be assumed that the miserable man who appears in this Finland correspondence was the only Suworof. He could never be his whole self without a grievance, but he had capacity for pleasures of other sorts. From his own letters and the recollections of other people we get some more attractive details for the composite picture. This is his own description of his daily life :

Gorgeous headquarters at Viborg. Every Sunday a dance, a big dinner, and an evening reception ; on holidays full dress parade according to the rules of tactics. I sometimes sleep till midday, but occasionally I enjoy hunting hares or sea scorpions. At my own time I receive reports, and for the sake of discipline make occasional notes on them. I make no plans, and the later I finish the longer I'm wanted. I've done some work ; would that others had done some too. What a contrast ! Instead of looking after the sick I hate them ; I run, gallop about like an orderly of the day ; I try to finish everything in one year instead of ten ; instead of gorgeous dances I long to turn out garrisons ; I crave to be where there's any prospect of being in my element, and I pant for the field of battle as if it were the sacred valley of the nine sisters ; I shun pomp and celebrity, desire for fame seems only a desire for what I have long enjoyed ; I put away the insatiable thirst for rewards, as one already bestrewn with them ; in my enthusiasms I follow unswervingly the guiding hand of Minerva, and am unshakably convinced that I shall have completed nothing, until, in the capacity of a humble servant, I have drawn my last breath in the constant fulfilment of the will of the Empress.

The description is not quite accurate. But it will serve as that of Suworof as he appeared to himself. His external behaviour has been sketched in more detail by one of his associates.

He rose early, and if he showed any signs of contumacy, his servant Prokhor was under strict orders to pull him out of bed by the legs. Once out of bed, he ran about the room stark naked, or in the garden clad in shirt and boots, all the time learning by heart phrases in Finnish, Turkish, or Tartar, or some other foreign language of military importance. Then he washed, sponging himself all over with cold water, and drank his morning tea, still going on with his studies. After tea he sang part of the service of the Church, and went off to morning drill. Drill finished, he returned home and worked or read the newspapers. The midday meal was early and simple. As a rule he drank a small glass of vodka flavoured with spice, and ate a few radishes; if he was unwell, he drank schnapps aggravated by pepper. He seldom dined alone, and never while on active service; he was never so happy as when talking hard over a meal. On these occasions he had special dishes for himself, fruits and sweets he never ate, and he seldom drank wine. Only on festivals he treated himself to champagne. During Lent he had Church service in his room almost every day, and himself sang the responses. In Church at Easter he kissed and gave eggs to his friends and acquaintances, according to custom, but he never accepted an egg himself. He slept on a hay mattress, with two down pillows under his head; over him he had as a rule only a sheet, but in cold weather a blue cloak as well. He wore neither undervest nor gloves; the only fire he liked in his rooms was that which warmed the water for his bath. But he very seldom actually stepped into the bath; what he did was to warm himself in the steam and then splash himself with cold water. By way of contrast with this simplicity he was fond of pomade and scent, especially *eau de Havane*. He kept three menservants and a feldshyer, but as a rule paid little attention to appearances. He was fond of animals and petted them, but never kept one himself; sometimes, if he met a dog,

he barked at it, and in the same way he would mew in a friendly way at a cat.<sup>1</sup>

His correspondence with his daughter adds to the gentler aspect of his character. She was now sixteen years old, and left the Smolni Institute to live with the Khvostofs. In March the Empress made her one of the Ladies-in-Waiting. This was intended as a compliment, but it made Suvorof anxious about the child's morals :

It will be enough to be only a little at the theatre in the Hermitage, poor Natasha, don't be carried away by pleasures ! With your love of wisdom and virtue, you will cast a timely light on the infectious rottenness of those vanities, so deadly to morality and well-being. Read sometimes in the Prayers and the Psalter, homilies. . . .

Be patiently loyal to the great Monarch. I am her soldier, I am dying for my country ; the higher I am raised by her kindness, the sweeter it is for me to sacrifice myself for her. I am rapidly approaching the tomb, my conscience is unspotted, I am 60 years old, my body is crippled with wounds, and God has left me to live for the good of the State. . . . Shun people who love being famous for their wit ; for the most part it's a mark of perverted morals. . . . Be severe with men, and don't say very much to them. . . . If you happen to be beset with old men, show them that you want to kiss their hands, but don't give them yours.

The girl, who was neither very beautiful nor very wise, seems in fact to have been in little danger. But her father's suspicions of Courts and courtiers grew no weaker.<sup>2</sup> He began to think of marrying her, and

<sup>1</sup> Ivan Sergyeyef, *Vospominyenia* [Recollections] in *Mayak* (1842). A feldshyer is a man who has had some experience in a hospital. He may be intelligent, and is still the only doctor available for millions of the Russian peasantry.

<sup>2</sup> He once said to Khvostof, " For the Court you want three qualities —audacity, flexibility, and perfidy." A letter of Prince Gortchakof to his son Andryei, who had just been made a Kammer-Junker, shows the same temper. The Prince told Suvorof of the youth's promotion. " He began to describe how he had taught Lexie [another son of the



considered the claims of a Saltikof and a Dolgorukof. Khvostof wisely persuaded him to drop the project for the time being. His letters to her continue to express the warmth of his affection :

My soul, Natasha ! God's blessing with you ! Be honourable and virtuous, and shun idleness. Would that my heart could reach you ! Eh ! Here with us there are great excursions on the water, in the forest, on the rocky mountains, and lots of good things, fish, wild birds, flowers, little chickens. As our wizard Lieutenant-Colonel Beer has come to stay with us, the weather is now good ; the birds are singing, swallows, nightingales, and many others. Yesterday we had dinner on the island ; to-morrow we want to sail to the German mainland ; there we shall be far away ; everywhere I shall kiss your eyes. Whenever you go for a walk and come home and romp in the house, then remember me, as I remember you. . . .

Eh ! My soul, Natasha ! go about in the boat, there are pussy cats everywhere there, what splendid live salmon they catch here, and I'm writing on Friday, and on Friday you wanted to go to Countess Natalia Volodimirovna's. So it happens that on the same day and at the very same hour that you're having dinner, it'll be time for me to have dinner too. I've written a great deal, my eyes are as if they were in the specs that people wear on their noses. God's blessing on you. Kiss your Auntie for me.

Natasha ! Ah, Good Lord, how bored I am without seeing you for so long. Good Lord ! how glad I shall be to see you and to find how big you've grown. Pray God I may set eyes on you. . . .

Prince] how to serve as a Cossack, private soldier, sergeant, and officer, and praised him for his quick understanding and his enthusiastic progress in all his duties, so that he's now earning praise as a leader of men . . . and then, not so much as mentioning you, he indulged in criticisms of courtiers, their approach, their gait, their bows, their flattering speech, their meaningless smiles and haughty looks, their hair-splitting, and so forth. It's clear that he doesn't like it, and that's why he's never written a word to me about you." I have unfortunately lost the references for both these quotations.

Yet other letters reveal him in other capacities. His love of reading had never deserted him, and he read not only books but newspapers. He followed the course of events in Europe with thirsty eagerness, and watched for wars as sailors watch for fair winds. On the 2nd November 1791 he wrote thus to Baron Saken :

Baron Fabian Vilmovitch ! I have kept up the papers—for German, Hamburg, Vienna, Berlin, Ellanger [Elangen] ; for French, Bas Rhin, *Courier de Londres* ; Warsaw for Polish ; S. Petersburg or Moscow for Russian ; the little French *Journal Encyclopédique de Bullion*, the German *Hamburg Political Journal*. As this year is at its end and I must order new ones for the next, I humbly ask your Honour to take on yourself the burden of getting them—and be good enough to add the *Nouvelles Extraordinaires*. Whether of these above-mentioned newspapers you will like or will decide to keep any of them, that I leave in all humility to your determination. Be good enough to give the order, with some payment on account as is customary, and inform me of the whole price so that I can pay you the money without delay.

One of the books which affected him at this time was Macpherson's *Ossian*. True, he read it in a Russian translation of a French translation, but even with such a double dilution of the romantic spirit of the original, he was delighted. He exchanged letters with Kostrof, the translator, sent him money, even wanted to give him a life pension. Kostrof dexterously compared his patron to Fingal, and Suworof, in one of his letters to Khvostof, overflowed into a sort of Ossianic prose, the obscurities of which in some passages defy his biographers.

I wander in these rock-strewn places ; I sing songs out of *Ossian*. Oh ! in what darkness I ! Piercing the gloom give me rather the light of day. A translation from the English.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I do not suppose that there is in fact any English original of this epigram. It obviously refers to Ryepnin's victory at Matchin.

Dimming the brilliant lustre of all former overthrows,  
The fifteen thousand Matchin scum he battered with his  
blows ;  
The hero puffs his loud bassoon, and celebrates the stroke  
With which a hundred thousand and the Grand Vizier he  
broke.

I visited Neushlott, borne thither on the wings of a light wind emerging from the womb of Kutvyenetaipolye traversing the wastes of Pumala, I pant from the prolonged stress. Returning, I am in Kevkenschild ; its coast is not so arrayed in rocks as at Kutvyenetaipolye. There only their fringes are to be seen. Look at this crag, a hundred of its dry oaks burn without ceasing. A flaxen torch involves it in a thick cloud, they fall and the wind is full of darkness. But what do I see ! The solid earth yields to the dense waves of the well-skilled Saim. Where is my friend Steinhel ? In the arms of his beloved spouse, or in commerce with souls transmigrated into these thick mists, he thrusts me into melancholy, augments the sorrow which comes flying from the South. Oh Bards ! Sing of the joy that dwells there. . . . Shall I soon be borne by its eagles into those lands of milk and honey, where I have made such holiday with men-at-arms ? . . .

As appears from these letters, he did not despise entertainments. He was in fact a thorough Russian, and enjoyed eating and drinking, dancing, and picnicking, as only a Russian can. No doubt he got a special pleasure out of being the principal personage at the numerous festivities of his district. Of one of these a vivid description has been preserved.<sup>1</sup>

When his headquarters were at Friedrichsham, he lived at the house of a lady called Grin, the widow of a staff surgeon. He occupied the best apartments, and she, with her daughter and niece, lived on the upper floor. He treated her with his usual affectionate familiarity, drinking tea with her, and calling her "Mummy." Both the girls were to be married on the

<sup>1</sup> This account is taken from a contribution by Milyutin to one of the periodicals of 1860 or 1861. The exact reference is among my papers in Petrograd.

same day, and the good lady at last summoned up her courage, and begged her famous guest to give away the brides. He at once consented, and offered the use of his own rooms. To her profuse thanks he replied: "Not a bit of it! Not a bit of it! I love you, Mummy; truly, as a soldier I say it, I love you. I'm a soldier, a straight fellow, not a double-dealer; where my thought is, there's my tongue too. And, look here, Mummy," shaking his fist, "see that I'm not hungry at your supper; I'm a Russian soldier, I love shtshi and kasha."<sup>1</sup> When she feared that he would object to being crowded out of his own rooms, he burst out: "Merciful God! Disturb a Russian soldier! Is he a cry-baby, pray? Give me a garret, or even a cupboard, and a bundle of hay, and I'll sleep and I'll snore till the cock crows."

The rooms were vacated, dusted and made beautiful. On the evening of the great day the guests arrived. The daughter's husband was an Italian doctor, who appeared in sober dress. The young teacher who had secured the niece, had unhappily clad himself in the latest Paris fashion, with a high stock and a curled and powdered wig, smelling of scent at several paces' distance. Suvorof was in full uniform, with all his Orders. When his eyes fell upon the teacher he made a grimace. During the actual ceremony he scowled, looked at the young dandy, wrinkled his brows, sniffed, cleared his throat, and spat. Then he began to mutter: "A coxcomb! Merciful God, a coxcomb! A head with a campaign kettle on it! A caperer! A scent-bottle!" And he blew his nose violently.

At the end of the service the husbands were presented to him. He gave his hand cordially to the doctor, but when the teacher appeared before him he snatched out his handkerchief, held his nose, and looked with a scowl at the offending wig. When the dancing began, the

<sup>1</sup> "Shtshi" is a vegetable soup, "kasha" any grain, millet, rice, buckwheat, barley, etc., eaten out of a pot. Our porridge and rice pudding would be called "kasha" by a Russian.

General promenaded with the daughter and danced with the niece. The teacher, blind and deaf to every sign of displeasure, danced, laughed, and ran about the room, as unmindful of the coming doom as the little victims whose play the poet contemplated at Eton. But all might have been well had he not, in leading a lady back to her seat, trodden on Suvorof's toe. Then the suppressed eruption burst forth. Suvorof clasped his outraged foot, and howled: "Ow, ow, ow! I can't walk! Merciful God! I'm lame! I'm crippled!" The guests were dismayed, the hostess shook with terror, the hapless bridegroom stood rooted to the floor. In vain they offered Suvorof a chair. His complaints grew louder. "Oh, the frizzled coxcomb! He's knocked my leg off! A head with a top-knot, a beastly big top-knot! Oh! Merciful God! I'm crippled! Oh, the glib-tongued prig, the scent-bottle!" Then he turned upon Madame Grin. "Mummy, where's the brush you cleaned the ceilings with?" "It's outside, Count," stammered the poor woman. "Show it me." The brush was brought in. "Ah! A famous brush!" vociferated Suvorof, glaring at the wig. The wretched youth backed against the wall, expecting anything and everything. But Suvorof was content with a long-range bombardment, and for once refrained from attacking his enemy at close quarters. "A perfect barber's block! Splendidly trimmed, Merciful God! Sleek enough to clean a wall with! There are people who can talk over a whole town, and raise no end of a dust. . . . But their heads—Poof! A mop, by the Lord, a mop!" Then he turned to the hostess, and began to talk to her about Moscow pancakes. The guests gradually resumed the programme, and the teacher retired to such consolations as his bride could afford him.

Whatever wretchedness of spirit Suvorof may have poured into his letters from Finland, it is impossible not to believe that on one night at least he was supremely happy.

The rescript of the 21st November entrusted him with

the command of all the troops in the Government of Yekaterinoslav, the Crimea, and the districts between the Bug and the Dnyestr, which had been acquired by the last war with Turkey. He had also to inspect the defences of the new frontier, and complete the fortifications begun by Major de Bollan. The fleet on the Black Sea was not under his orders, but the troops on board the river flotilla of De Ribas were. The reason for his appointment was the renewal of French intrigues at Constantinople, and he took up his duties with alacrity, looking for another war. The Polish rising had been easily suppressed, and the country was in process of being again partitioned; the war with France was apparently not going to take place, and the only chance of real service was in the South. He was disappointed. The energy of the Turks was not equal to their ill-will, and he had no opportunity of again defeating armies which had already contributed so much to his reputation. In the result, he had to confine himself to the same sort of activity as in Finland: the building of forts, the care and training of troops, and of course the writing of letters.

He was no fonder than before of administrative work, least of all of the repairing of fortifications, which in his view were rather encumbrances than means of defence. Nevertheless, as he had to look after them, he flung himself into the distasteful business with his usual energy. He at once began to make contracts and to pay for work done by means of bills of exchange. These methods were too rapid for his superiors. Turtchaninof wrote to him explaining with great care that the political situation scarcely required such haste, that there was not much money in the Treasury, and that some of the work must be done more slowly, so that the expenditure might be spread over a longer period. Suvorof replied bluntly:

You are putting an end to my beginnings, and warn me against projects of which I have already laid firm

foundations. . . . For the political situation please enquire of the Vice-Chancellor ; I look at things like a field officer. You would have taken two months instead of two days, chasing me about as if you were after a fish with a net, knowing I'm not a man to sleep. The year would have been wasted if I had delayed here at all with the contractors, without whom it is impossible to get on in the present state of the country. You say we don't need them. You should have told me that in Petersburg. Anyhow, this year it can't be undone ; next year you can do what you like. Send me the money, and one of your cashiers with it.

He did not get what he wanted. An Imperial re-script approved in general terms of his plans, but directed him to postpone the execution of a great part of them, and, as to his contracts, informed him that no department of State except the Senate could enter into contracts of more than 10,000 roubles in value, and those which he had made were in consequence invalid. This was a great blow, and it is not surprising to find him declaring in a letter to Khvostof :

It is simple truth that I prefer Finland to this place.

To Turtchaninof he wrote :

Honest people don't do these things ; you play with your word, I believe it, and you set your sail to every wind, seeing that they're inconstant.

Then to Khvostof again :

God help me ! I'm in such misery. Even Prince Grigori Alexandrovitch [Potyomkin] never so degraded me.

To add to his difficulties, the contractors themselves began to make claims against him in person, and at the same time he was called upon to repay to the State sums which he had already expended out of public funds. He wrote to Khvostof, instructing him to sell his villages near Novgorod "for not less than 100,000 roubles. Transfer the people to Suzdal." Later he

wrote again. The contractors wanted 23,648 roubles and the State 67,500, and the reserve price of the villages was raised accordingly to 150,000, or at the very lowest 135,000 roubles. The actual result of the affair is not known. But by some means or other a compromise was reached, and Suvorof was not required to pay anything out of his own pocket.<sup>1</sup>

Here, as in Finland, he fell foul of the hospitals. In one of his letters to Turtchaninof he reported a conversation with one of his staff officers, who wanted to go back to regimental duties.

"Zuibin, why are you running away to your company? There's no ill-will between us, is there? Be honest, and tell me." "I get an income of 1000 roubles a year there." "How?" "From the dead soldiers."

Zuibin wanted to make profits out of the dead men he would be able to keep on the strength of his company. Suvorof knew that the prevention of this sort of corruption was practically impossible, so far as inspection and punishment were concerned, but he could do something to lessen the excessive mortality which made it easy. He therefore carried on his crusade against the hospitals, and at the same time did his best to teach officers and men the elementary rules of hygiene. In a general order addressed to his medical officers on the 8th August he published the rules drawn up by his Staff Surgeon, Yefim Byelopolski. The rules naturally take no account of microbic infections, but in their insistence upon cleanliness, fresh air, and proper food they are very sound. Some passages deserve quotation.

Constantly inspect the causes of increasing diseases, and seek them out not in the hospitals among the sick, but among the healthy, by regiments, battalions, companies, and platoons, and the various separate commands, enquiring into their food, drink, structure of barracks and earth huts, the date of their erection,

<sup>1</sup> I have taken the whole of this account from Pyetrushevski. The letters are in the Sbornik at Petrograd.



their extent and air space, cleanliness, cooking utensils, all their contents, and their various possibilities of debilitating the men. . . .

Endeavour to have a supply of simple domestic remedies in every store. . . .

Those brought in with trivial and inconsiderable diseases, such as little boils, little scrofulous wounds or spots, give them a plaster or other remedy and send them back to their regiments, taking no notice of any grumbling about it, because a little disease, through negligence in the hospital, is turned into a serious one, sometimes actually into a mortal one. For the others, after examination, prescribe two or three days' rest, ordering them to come every day to the hospital for medicine. . . .

The water of the Dnyestr, although not of perfect purity, is nevertheless not so bad as appears at first sight; because it has everywhere a rapid current; all harm which comes from it consists in the slimy mud, which settles heavily in the belly and produces different diseases. Therefore it is necessary to let it stand in tubs. . . . Pour the water into these tubs in the evening, and by morning it will be completely settled and fit for cooking and drinking. But for drinking it should only be used in case of need and during a march . . . at other times good kvass must be in all stores and in hospital. Healthy men may use the Dnyestr fish for food without hesitation, but only if it is fresh, either newly caught or salted and well boiled.

Scurvy in this country has shown itself more dangerous than elsewhere . . . it is cured especially by cleanliness, observed in everything, . . . by fresh acid food and drink, with exercise; sometimes by change of camping ground and daily bathing in a swift flowing river . . . by some cabbage, horse radish, etc. etc. . . . Bathing in sea water, wherever possible, cures scurvy and the itch . . . fumigate the barracks with pitch and chips of tar barrels. . . . Fever is cured apart from purgatives, emetics, calorifics, salts, and finally stimulating drugs, especially by refraining from food and drink and by the use of Siberian salt dissolved in water. . . .

The rules are good enough so far as they go. Dirty habits and improper food are the principal causes of the

diseases of war. The most deadly of Russian military diseases were scurvy and typhus. The first is due to improper food. The second is a dirt disease, spreading from man to man by means of lice. Both were due to national faults, slovenliness in organising transport, speculation and bribery, carelessness about personal cleanliness. The hospitals would not increase scurvy. But the man who got into a filthy, unwashed, and overcrowded hospital, however mild his complaint, was exposed at once to the infection of typhus. A wounded man would of course be in danger of erysipelas, and every wound would become septic. As there were hardly any military doctors except those attached to Generals and their Staffs, the sick and wounded were generally left to the care of feldshyers, whose skill varied greatly, and could seldom be equal to that of a modern medical student after three months in a general hospital.

With no field ambulances or field hospitals, so that compound fractures without amputation meant death, and even lightly wounded men often staggered into the distant base hospitals with maggots<sup>1</sup> breeding in their flesh, the sight of such a building after a battle must have been beyond modern imagination. Even in time of peace it was only too often a breeding ground of disease, and Suvorof, with characteristic directness, strove by every means in his power to keep his men out of it. If Byelopolski's directions were carried out, typhus and other infectious disorders would certainly be reduced.

One letter of this time shows Suvorof in his sweeter

<sup>1</sup> Maggots in wounds were not uncommon in Russian field hospitals during the present war. In a very fair Russian hospital with which I was myself acquainted, the orderlies washed a ward of twelve patients. An orderly brought a basin of water and a rag, wet the rag and wiped the face of each patient in turn. In another hospital the orderly filled his mouth with water and blew it over the faces of the patients, afterwards wiping them. Washing a patient's body was very rare, and generally only happened if the patient could do it himself.

mood. The Austrian General Karaczay, whose steady conduct in the field of the Ruimnik had contributed so much to the success of that day, asked him to be godfather to his son. Such a request would please Suvorof beyond measure, and he set down in a letter to his infant godson what he considered the main rules for his future military life.

MY DEAR SON ALEXANDER—As a military man, study well a Vauban, a Coghorn [Cohorn], a Curas, a Hubner; a little theology, physics, and ethics; read well Eugene, Turenne, the commentaries of Caesar, Frederick II., the first volumes of Rollin with the continuation, and Cte. de Saxe; languages are for literature; dance; fit up and manage weapons a little. The military virtues are: bravery in the soldier, courage in the officer, valour in the general, but guided by the principles of order and discipline, dominated by vigilance and foresight. Be frank with your friends, temperate in your requirements and disinterested in conduct; bear an ardent zeal for the service of your Sovereign; love true fame, distinguish ambition from pride and vainglory; learn early to forgive the faults of others, and never forgive your own; drill your soldiers well, and give them a pattern in yourself. Constant practice of quick apprehension will by itself make you a great general. Learn to profit by local circumstances; be patient in military work, don't let yourself be daunted by reverses; distinguish between objects true, doubtful, and false; don't let yourself be taken aback by an explosion from an unforeseen quarter. Preserve in your memory the names of great men; and follow them in your marches and operations—but with caution; never despise your enemy, whoever he may be; and know well his weapons, his way of employing them and fighting; know his strength and his weakness. Accustom yourself to tireless activity; rule fortune; it is the moment which gives victory, master it by the swiftness of Caesar, who knew so well how to surprise his enemies, even in broad daylight, to turn them and attack them where and when he wished, without ever being compelled to cut off their supplies of food and fodder; and study the art of never being in want of supplies for your own

troops. God raise you to the level of the heroic Karaczay.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally enough, he had not long been in Kherson before he began to ask for employment elsewhere. On the 5th July he wrote direct to the Empress :

I most obediently request your Imperial Highness most graciously to permit me, in this present quiet, to serve as a volunteer in the German Allied Armies, for the whole campaign, retaining my present maintenance out of your Royal bounty.

Turning, Most Gracious Sovereign, to the most sacred throne of Your Imperial Highness, your most obedient  
COUNT SUWOROF RUIMNIKSI.

At the same time he wrote to Khvostof :

I most obediently request the great Monarch to give me leave to serve in this prolonged campaign with the German allied Army, with my present maintenance, *i.e.* pay and rations, with my staff and mess allowance of 500 roubles a month. For this I shall need a passport and ordinary recommendations. I humbly request your Excellency for help in fitting me out in Kherson, where at present all is quiet, and I have already been a long time out of practice.

Catherine's reply is dated the 13th August :

You ask to be a volunteer in the allied army. To that I reply that affairs at home increase daily in importance, and you will soon be able to have as much military practice as you want, here. Therefore, in not releasing you to correct your pupil, who, according to the latest news, is betaking himself across the Rhine, I now, as ever, consider your utility to your country.

The Empress was not going to throw away her priceless Suworof in an attempt to correct the errors of his "pupil," Coburg. He could win personal glory in France. But more tangible profits for Catherine would soon be within reach at home. So he was kept, champing his bit, in Kherson, while the Polish disease throbbed to its fatal end.

<sup>1</sup> This letter is set out in the Appendix to Pyetrushewski's second volume.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SECOND POLISH WAR

Poland after the Partition—Rising of 1794—Rumyantsov sends Suvorof into the country—Battles of Krupchitsa and Brest—Halt at Brest—Battle of Kobuilk—Storm of Praga and capitulation of Warsaw—Suvorof as pacificator—Anecdotes true and false—Recall to Petersburg, 1795—An adventure by the way—Upsetting the Court—Sent to Tultchin—The *Science of Victory*—How it worked in practice—The foundation of modern Russian training—Death of Catherine the Great.

AFTER the first partition, the affairs of Poland for a time presented a less deplorable aspect than before. Nevertheless, the permanent Russian garrison had remained a source of irritation, and discontent, carefully fostered by Russian intrigues, grew steadily. The new ideas which were being proclaimed in France gave a fresh direction to political enthusiasm, and side by side with the national movement against Russia marched a new democratic movement, directed towards popular control of government. The two movements combined to produce the proposed new constitution of 1791, which involved, among other things, the abolition of the elective monarchy, the *liberum veto*, and the irresponsibility of Ministers. The crown was offered, after the death of Stanislaw, to the Elector of Saxony. This project alarmed both Catherine of Russia, the dominant power in Poland as it was, and Frederick William of Prussia, who feared a combination between Saxony and Poland in the East, while he was already threatened with unknown dangers from the French Republic in the West.

At the invitation of a section of the nobility, which was in fact superfluous, both Powers objected to the proposed constitution. Austria, without asserting any claim at the moment, gave them a moral support which would afterwards require the payment of its price. Hostilities broke out in 1792, as soon as Russia was free from the embarrassment of the Turkish War, and though the Polish Army was now by no means so contemptible as the raw levies of the first war, it had the worst of several engagements. This was the campaign which agitated Suworof during his stay in Finland.

In the result, the country was for the second time partitioned. The immediate excuse was that Frederick William, after their first disastrous campaign against the French Republic, felt himself unable to assist the Austrian Emperor, unless he received some compensation for his sacrifices. The only possible way of compensating him was to let him take some more of Poland, and as Catherine naturally required some return for her acquiescence, it followed that she also must obtain it in the same form. The Second Partition of Poland, in 1793, therefore transferred a second third of the whole population into the hands of Russia and Prussia, and the remaining third was kept in the same state of miserable dependence as before. A new rebellion was carefully organised, and at the end of March 1794 it broke out at Cracow. On the 4th April, Thaddeus Kosciusko, a good soldier, and a disinterested patriot, who had studied in Paris and fought under Washington at Saratoga, beat a Russian force under Major-General Tormasof at Ratslavitsi. On the 6th April the population of Warsaw rose in furious revolt, killed about 2000 of the Russian garrison, took 1700 more prisoners, and after two days of merciless fighting drove the remaining 7000 out of the city.

This rebellion was a more serious matter than that of 1770. By this time Poland had an army. Many of the insurgents were no more than peasants armed with

scythe blades on the ends of long poles. But there was a strong nucleus of disciplined troops, a very efficient artillery, and many of the officers had not only had a scientific professional education, but had served in foreign armies. This regular force was reinforced by the adhesion of several strong detachments of Polish troops in the Russian service, who hurried to join them even before the rising at Warsaw. A system of conscription introduced by Kosciusko provided a considerable number of recruits, and by the time that Suvorof came upon the scene the number of Poles under arms can hardly have been less than 75,000. Against these the Russian troops available were 25,000 men under Ryepnin between Riga and Pinsk, 19,000 under Derfelden, as Ryepnin's subordinate, further south, and Fersen, with the remains of the garrison of Warsaw, about 12,000 strong, to the south-west of the Polish capital. A Prussian force of 10,000, of which Frederick William himself soon took command, co-operated with Fersen. Suvorof, with 50,000 men, was in Little Russia and the Crimea, owing immediate obedience to Rumyantsof.<sup>1</sup>

The first operations were indecisive. The Prussian King and Fersen defeated Kosciusko, but the latter succeeded in throwing himself into Warsaw, where they blockaded him. The Prussians were drawn off by a rising in the newly acquired Prussian Poland, and Fersen fell back, covering their retreat. Derfelden was withdrawn by Ryepnin, and by the beginning of August both sides seemed to be settling down, to collect their strength for vigorous action in the next year. Into this scene of sluggishness and pusillanimity Rumyantsof flung Suvorof.

The latter, with a special force of some 13,000 men, had been engaged in disarming the Polish troops in his

<sup>1</sup> Orlof, *Shturm Pragi*, 20, 22. The Austrian force moved into Polish territory in July. But this was merely to secure in advance a share of the spoil. The Austrians never came into action.

district. This difficult task was accomplished with perfect success, and in less than a fortnight 8000 men laid down their arms without a shot being fired on either side.<sup>1</sup> The news from Poland itself filled Suworof with impatience. He could finish the business, he declared, in forty days,<sup>2</sup> and he begged Rummyantsof to send him to the theatre of real war. On the 12th August the last Polish soldier had surrendered. On the 18th Rummyantsof told Suworof to march against the enemy. "Your Excellency was always a terror to the Poles and the Turks, and on every occasion you burn with impatience and envy wherever there is so much as talk of active service." Nevertheless, for the time being Suworof was only to make a demonstration.<sup>3</sup> Demonstration or no demonstration, this was enough to set him on the march. He left Nemirof on the 25th August, marching towards Brest. On the road he was overtaken by an Imperial rescript from Petersburg, ordering him to halt at Brest, to build magazines for Derfelden and Fersen. He replied to Rummyantsof:

The ignorant Petersburgians cannot make rules for the Russian Nestor [*i.e.* Rummyantsof] to me his wishes only are sacred. Time is the most valuable thing. Julius Caesar conquered by speed. I shall wait patiently two days for provisions. . . . I must hurry towards Brest, if the rebels are not beaten in the interval, but not for magazine building . . . there are younger men—or do without altogether. There I must get reinforcements, go to Praga, and so cut off supplies from Litva to Warsaw.<sup>4</sup>

From the first he had no doubt of his objective: Warsaw, the head and heart of the rising. Towards

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 158 *et seq.* The disbanded men received all arrears of pay due to them and were sent to their homes.

<sup>2</sup> Pyetrush. ii. 23, 41.

<sup>3</sup> The instructions of Rummyantsof are set out in Orlof, 105.

<sup>4</sup> Pyetrush. ii. 51. Praga is the suburb of Warsaw on the right or eastern bank of the Vistula.



Brest he marched with his usual speed, with 4500 men and 10 guns, picking up 6500 more men and 6 guns on the way. From Nemirof to Varkovitch is 180 miles. This stage was accomplished in nine days, the ordinary marching rate of Russian troops being 65 miles a week. One day was spent at Varkovitch in repairing waggons and baking bread, and then five days of marching brought him to Kovel, 85 miles further on, and 40 miles across the frontier of Poland. After a halt of two days he again pushed forward on the 11th September, expecting at any moment to encounter the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

Both leader and men were in high spirits. All were in thin summer clothing, each man carried a spare pair of boots and biscuits for eight days, and two hospital carts for each regiment and one field kitchen and one waggon for officers' baggage for each company or squadron formed the whole baggage train. Guides were generally taken from among the Jews of the district. Suvorof himself rode on horseback, attended by his servant Prokhor and a single Cossack, and he never got into a carriage. He was constantly beside his men, calling his veterans by their names or the nick-names, "Eagle," "Fire," and the like, which he applied to them, reminding them of their old fights against the Turks, and exchanging the broad jests which the Russian soldier still loves. If "Father Alexander Vassilyevitch" rode past a regiment without pausing to scatter these greetings, the men knew they were guilty of some fault. At the halts he sat among the men, sharing their coarse rations, and he slept, as always, on a straw mattress or the ground. The first stages had been covered with music and marching songs, but as they advanced into the enemy's country noise of every kind was forbidden. The hour of departure was never fixed; the men were to start "at cockcrow." Every morning Suvorof himself flapped his arms and crowed, and in fifteen minutes the troops were in

<sup>1</sup> Orlof, 37.

movement. In this happy style the little army marched swiftly to meet the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

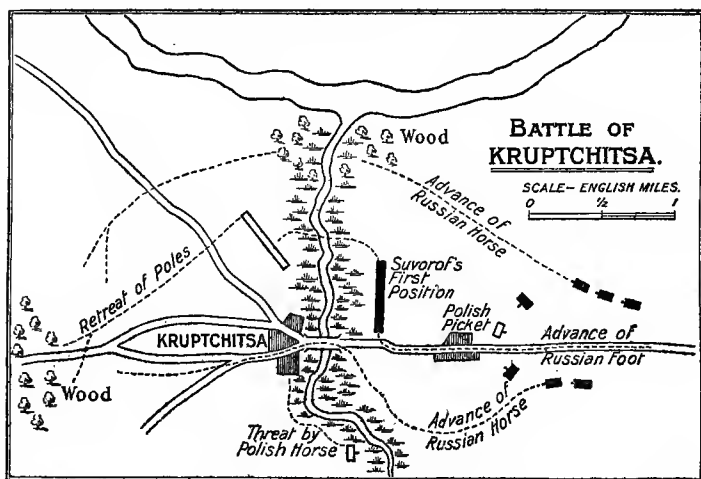
It is one of the most curious of Slav complexities that troops who go to war in this spirit of boyish, almost childlike gaiety, should prove terrible adversaries in battle. The first encounter with the Poles took place at Divin, 60 miles from Kovel, and the insurgents found Suvorof and his men in anything but a playful mood. At dawn on the 14th the Cossacks of the vanguard fell upon some 200 Polish horse and cut them to pieces. The few prisoners who were taken said that 400 or 500 men of Syerakovski's army were at Kobrin, 20 miles ahead. Disregarding the suggestion that he should send scouts to investigate the truth of the story, Suvorof pushed on after a halt of a few hours, and the Cossacks, starting at midnight, attacked the enemy at 4 o'clock on the morning of the 15th. The Poles were again taken completely by surprise. Hardly any succeeded even in getting on horseback, and this detachment, like the first, was annihilated. About 300 were killed, 65 were captured, and only 50 escaped. By 6 o'clock all was over, and a large number of horses and a well-furnished provision store were in the hands of the victors. Suvorof and the infantry did not arrive on the scene until 9 o'clock. The whole affair had been conducted by about 800 Cossacks.<sup>2</sup>

The battle with the main body began at 9 o'clock on the morning of the 16th at Krupchitsa, 10 miles beyond Kobrin. Syerakovski, with 12,000 infantry, 3500 cavalry, and 2000 scythemen, occupied a strong position. A stream flowing through a marsh 200 yards wide ran across his front, and he extended his men along the

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 168 *et seq.* The "Cockcrow" and other details of the manner of march are taken from *The Anecdotes of an Old Soldier about Suvorof*. The author, Starkof, served under Suvorof in this campaign and afterwards in Italy, and collected many facts from Bagration. His book is invaluable as a representation of Suvorof among his men.

<sup>2</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 170 *et seq.*; Orlof, 40.

sloping ground beyond it, in front of the village and convent of Kruptchitsa. The road passed over the swamp opposite his centre, and an advanced post, with some guns, held a few buildings at the Russian end of the bridge. Hills covered with thick woods in the rear offered the Poles some refuge in case of an overthrow, and their left wing was covered by another wood. The battle lasted all day. A brisk cannonade soon drove the enemy out of the *tête de pont*. Some horse



from the Polish right then threatened to turn the Russian left. Suvorof countered their move by sending some of his own cavalry to meet it, but they failed to cross the swamp, and both parties remained facing each other over the barrier. Suvorof then turned his attention to the enemy's left. After some bombardment of their position, he ordered an infantry attack, and in two columns, partly assisted by planks torn from the neighbouring cottages, the Russians struggled through the mud outside the Polish left wing, and even succeeded in carrying four of their little regimental cannon with them on their shoulders. The field-guns continued to

fire across the marsh to the right of the bridge. Some Cossacks and three squadrons of hussars scrambled after the infantry. The whole body then formed and charged up the opposite slope. The bulk of the cavalry swept still further to the right and began to force its way through the wood. The Poles moved to the left and swung back their left wing to meet this flank attack. After a stubborn hand-to-hand combat in the centre, some of them broke their ranks and fled into the monastery, where they were killed at the feet of the terrified monks. But the main body of infantry, formed into three close columns, with the cavalry on the flanks, fell sullenly back, disputing every foot of the ground. At this point the main body of the Russian cavalry came up. The squadrons recalled from the left wing crossed by the bridge, and fell upon the left rear of the retreating mass. The others on the right had encountered great difficulties. At last they succeeded in leading their horses across floating roads of hastily felled timber, and they attacked the retreating columns from their right flank. The Poles were thus charged from both sides, while the infantry continued to press them in the rear. Nevertheless, they held sternly together, and their guns fired until the end. Bearing to the left along the road to Perki, they withdrew, as darkness fell, into the woods in their rear, and the Russians were compelled to abandon the pursuit. The Poles had lost 3000 men, and the Russians only 700. But if the latter could claim the victory, the former could reflect that they had saved all their artillery and shown Suvorof that in this war there would be no Landskron.

The day had been exhausting for Suvorof as well as for his men. From the first moment of the battle, he had been always at the point of difficulty, directing and encouraging the troops. He had sent back to Kobrin for the kitchen train, and an hour after the last shot had been fired the soup was being boiled. He himself

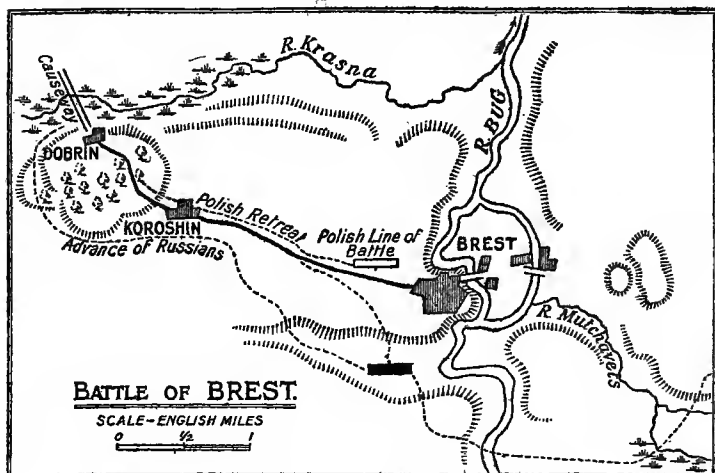
rode to the top of a mound, slipped from the saddle, crossed himself, said, "Praise to God in the highest!" ate a biscuit, drank a glass of vodka, and lay down to sleep, wrapped in his cloak, under a tree. After a rest he leaped up, ate a meal, mounted his horse, and rode down to the troops. They crowded round him with cheers and laughter, while he praised those who had distinguished themselves. Then he collected the whole body, took off his hat and recited in a loud voice the prayer, "Almighty God, being enabled by Thy Holy Providence to come to this hour of night..." Then he visited the wounded and gave instructions for their disposal, ordered the prisoners to be sent to the rear, and their weapons to be destroyed. At 2 o'clock in the morning the march was resumed, with the special order "Cartridges to be kept dry," which the old Suvorovians knew meant that they would have to ford a river.<sup>1</sup>

By 5 o'clock on the afternoon of the 18th the column was within 2 miles of Brest, after covering 28 miles in 39 hours. Syerakovski had received some reinforcements. Nevertheless, according to the information of a Jew, he was determined to continue his retreat, and had already sent his baggage on ahead. Suvorof decided to attack at once. The further he plunged into hostile territory the more difficult would it be to maintain his supplies without dangerously weakening his small force to provide baggage guards and foraging parties. If Syerakovski was to be destroyed he must be destroyed at Brest. The enemy had observed a party of Cossack scouts, but did not appear to suspect the presence of the Russian main body. The direct road to Brest crossed the river Bug by a bridge. Here Syerakovski had posted a battalion and two guns, while the bulk of his force lay encamped beyond the river, secured in this way against surprise. But there are two kinds of surprise, and if the Poles were not to

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. ; Orlof, 40 ; Starkof, i. 25 *et seq.*

be beaten by a direct attack at an unexpectedly early hour, they might still be beaten by a flank attack from an unexpected direction. Suworof, knowing the indefatigable character of his troops, set them the task of making a long and circuitous march and then attacking the enemy from his right flank.

At 2 o'clock on the morning of the 19th he advanced in two columns, the right of cavalry and the left of infantry and artillery. Before them lay two



rivers, the Mutchavets and the Bug. The first they forded unobserved, but the marshes of the further bank caused some delay, and before the whole force was extricated it was already daylight. Three miles separated them from the Bug, and before they reached it all the church and convent bells of Brest were sounding the alarm. Nevertheless the pace was too quick for the Polish army. Dashing forward to the river, the Russians plunged through it, and formed up on the opposite bank without opposition, a mile away from the Polish camp. As usual, the infantry were in the centre, with the fourteen guns of the field artillery. Twenty-

five squadrons under General Shevitch were on the right, thirteen squadrons and the bulk of the Cossacks under General Islyenyef on the left. The whole force was in the right rear of the enemy. But the Poles, if too slow to prevent the passage of the river, had time to take up a position facing the Russians, and the latter had to deal with an enemy equal in numbers and determined to fight.

Suvorof ordered the whole line to advance. Immediately, following the same plan as at Kobrin, the Poles fell into three dense columns, thirty abreast and one hundred deep, with artillery at each end of the intervening spaces and the cavalry on the flanks. Then they began to retreat steadily towards the woods in their rear, crossing the Russian line of advance from right to left. Over the broken ground Islyenyef's cavalry galloped with all speed. Emerging from a deep ravine, they were greeted with a heavy fire from four guns, which inflicted serious loss. But they charged the infantry of the nearest column in flank and rear. Two attacks were repelled, and only the third succeeded in breaking the Polish formation. The mass once dissolved, the Poles were frightfully mangled, and but for the support afforded by the other columns very few of the 3000 men would have escaped.

In the meantime these other columns had succeeded in keeping ahead of the Russians, and, passing through the village of Koroshin, took up a position on the slopes beyond it, with a dense wood covering their right flank. In this wood Syerakovski stationed eight of his big guns, supported by two squadrons of horse. The remnants of the broken column fled into safety under the fire of the battery, and Islyenyef was compelled to draw off. But as soon as four battalions of Russian infantry with four guns and the cavalry of the right wing came within striking distance, the Poles again formed their three columns and again made for the woods, the battery covering their retreat. This

time Shevitch first came into action. The nearest column, composing the left of the retiring enemy, was furiously attacked, and as furiously defended itself. Quarter was seldom asked and seldom granted, and the greater part of the men composing the column died where they stood.

The centre column had better fortune. While the battery in the wood kept the cavalry of the Russian left wing at bay, and the cavalry of the Russian right wing was engaged with the Polish left or rear, the Poles in the centre continued their withdrawal. When attacked at last by the cavalry they were already almost under shelter of the trees, and though they lost six guns, the bulk of the men for the time being escaped. But the Polish right, composed of the remains of the column first attacked, had suffered a complete overthrow. Islyenyef received reinforcements, attacked the battery and carried it, and then, turning upon the infantry of the exposed column, which was already engaged with the Russian battalions, cut down every man left in the open. The Polish horse in this part of the field attempted little opposition, and the greater part of it galloped to the rear, leaving the infantry to its fate.

The fight had so far pursued the same course as that at Kobrin. But it was little past midday, and there was no friendly darkness to cover the retreat of the Poles. The bulk of the fugitives from the Polish right were cut off by the Russian infantry, and the four guns attached to their column were taken. There remained the disorganised mass of the centre column and the debris of the cavalry and the infantry of the right and left. The flight extended along the Warsaw road to the village of Dobrin. Beyond the village ran the Krasna, one of the numerous swampy streams of which the district was full. This formed a continuous barrier, sweeping from west to east until it reached the Bug. The retreating Poles had been driven in a



north-westerly direction, making for a dyke and a wooden bridge, which afforded the only means of crossing the swamp. Some of the fugitives got across the bridge, but the Russian infantry and a detachment of Islyenyef's horse from the left wing, arriving almost simultaneously, succeeded in cutting off the retreat of the great mass. The bridge and dyke were partly broken down, and the Poles driven back into the village. The regimental cannon then opened fire on the houses, and the Russian field artillery began to play upon them from the other side. Some of the Polish cavalry attempted to break away across the marsh. But many were drowned, others were shot as they struggled in the mud, and only a handful escaped. The infantry in the village were all killed or taken, and at 2 o'clock in the afternoon the Polish army had ceased to exist. The artillery, 20 guns in all, and 2 standards bearing the legend "Freedom, Equality, and Independence" were the trophies of the victory. Syerakovski and a few hundred men fled to Warsaw, and others escaped the search parties in the woods and got away in various directions. But the highest estimate of those who eventually reached safety is 2000. The prisoners were about 500. All the rest of the 10,000 or 12,000 men who fought for Poland on this bloody day were dead. The losses of the victors are reckoned at not more than 1000 killed and wounded.<sup>1</sup>

This battle was a shattering blow to the insurrection. A large proportion of its regular army had disappeared, and a new Russian force, under a leader of terrible rapidity and striking power, was in the heart of its territory, at a point where he could be joined by the hitherto unco-ordinated detachments of Fersen and

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 179 *et seq.*; Orlof, 42. Suvorof reported his losses as 92 killed and 228 wounded. In this respect he was always very inaccurate. The Polish infantry were doing something during the six hours' fight besides being butchered.

Derfelden. But the war was by no means over. Suvorof had at the utmost 10,000 men, of whom part were now sent back with prisoners, and others were engaged in getting in supplies. The country was full of Polish partisans, and it was impossible for him to get into touch with Fersen, who was in fact on the western side of the Vistula, with the Polish army of Poninski between him and Suvorof. Derfelden was comparatively close at hand at Slonim, and thither Suvorof sent a message, begging him to advance to Byelostok, while he also requested Ryepnin to detach troops from his command to cover the country in the rear of Brest. Suvorof was in fact in some danger. To the north of him were the hostile detachments of Vavrzhetski and Hedroits, and to the west Kosciuszko, with Poninski, Grokhovski, and the remains of Syerakovski's shattered army. Without support he might be attacked at any time, and to advance further was, even for him, impossible. He was therefore compelled to wait at Brest, foraging in the fertile country around it, and doing his best to get the assistance which he required.

The latter task was not easy. He was not in supreme command, and Derfelden was under the orders of Ryepnin, who was not a friend of Suvorof's. Nor was Count Nicholas Saltikof, President of the Military College at Petersburg,<sup>1</sup> under whose general directions the whole war was being conducted. Requests for help were disregarded or fulfilled with limitations, so that Suvorof at last wrote in despair to Rumyantsov :

Thus, my Lord, for nearly three weeks I have been unable to move. I can say here what Maharbal said to Hannibal: "We know how to win battles, but not how to use our victories." The same time has been wasted at Brest as at Cannae and we are nearly at winter quarters.

<sup>1</sup> This office was not academic. It corresponded with that of the English Secretary of State for War.

Nevertheless, he and Rumyantsov together disposed troops to cover his communications, and while waiting for news of Derfelden and Fersen, he busied himself with keeping his own men in good condition, sending the Cossacks after raiding parties of the enemy, collecting supplies at Brest, and gathering information about the fortifications of Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> At last, on the 15th October, he learned that on the 10th Fersen, adroitly passing the barrier of the Vistula, had beaten Kosciusko himself at Matsyeovitsa, and that the Polish commander was a prisoner. Suvorof's left flank, in case of a march upon Warsaw, was now clear, and the loss of the wise, brave, and single-minded Kosciusko was in itself a mortal stroke at the heart of the Polish resistance. To follow up this success by a direct attack upon the capital was the obvious course for a man of Suvorof's temper, and his dispositions were quickly made. As soon as he heard of Fersen's success, he flung etiquette to the winds, and sent orders to him and to Derfelden to march to join him. Fersen had just received a direction from Ryepnin to obey Suvorof if required, but Derfelden had orders to distribute his men in winter quarters. The urgent advice of the young Major-General Valerian Zubof, brother of the reigning favourite, fortunately induced Derfelden to obey Suvorof; and the plan for the concentration of the three Russian forces did not miscarry. At the same time Suvorof begged the Austrians and Prussians operating in the south and west to draw in towards Warsaw, so as the better to protect the left flank of his line of march.<sup>2</sup>

Suvorof intended at first to move upon Byelsk. There he hoped to fall in with Derfelden, marching south from Byelostok, and crush the Polish army of Makranovski. But the Polish commander, hearing of Fersen's victory about the same time as Suvorof, retreated with such speed, that even Derfelden was

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 193 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Orlof, 58.

unable to overtake him. Some encounters with his rearguard took place, but he was not brought to battle, and Derfelden's force, marching by way of Byelsk, Bryansk, and Brok, turned south to join Suvorof to the east of Warsaw.<sup>1</sup> Suvorof himself abandoned the march upon Byelsk before he heard of Makranovski's retreat, and on the 18th he set his troops in march along the valley of the Bug, through Yanof, where he hoped to cut the Polish communications between Byelsk and Warsaw. Learning that Makranovski had already passed him to the north, he pressed on rapidly, sending an order to Fersen to reach Stanislavof on the 24th October and there wait for him. But his own pace was too rapid for both Fersen and Derfelden, and in response to the request of the former he moved more slowly through Bengrof and Sokolof, and himself did not arrive at Stanislavof till the morning of the 25th. There he found Fersen with about 11,000 men. His own force was about 8000. Derfelden, with some 12,000 more, was not yet on the spot.<sup>2</sup>

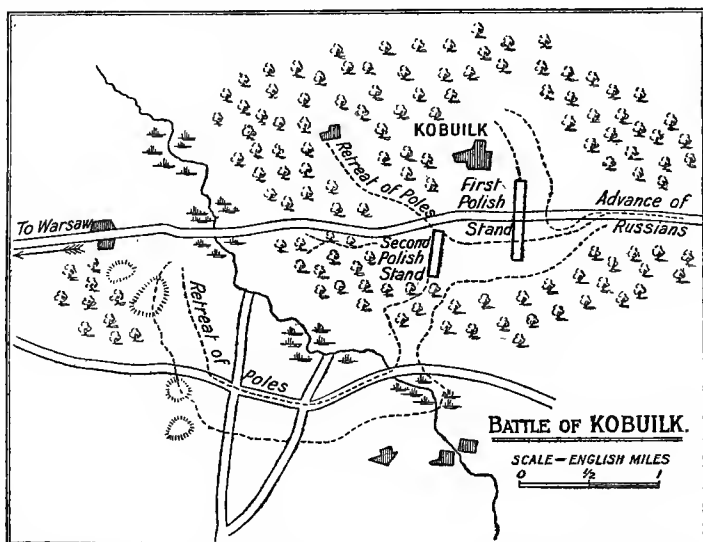
Getting information that one Polish force lay before him at Kobuilk and another 15 miles to the south-west, at Okunyef, he promptly despatched Fersen with all his troops except 1500 cavalry to deal with the latter, and prepared himself to attack the enemy at Kobuilk. This was a most hazardous thing to do. He was about 20 miles from Warsaw, in a hilly district covered with swamp and forest. Somewhere in front of him the enemy disposed of about 40,000 troops, whose quality was not to be despised. One of his lieutenants was an uncertain distance away to the north, and he deliberately sent half his own army to the distance of a day's march. This gave the Poles an admirable opportunity for annihilating one of the Russian detachments. A Polish Suvorof would have

<sup>1</sup> One battalion marched through Byelsk, Granno, Sokolof, and Bengrof. *Ibid.* 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Campagnes*, ii, 215 *et seq.*

availed himself of his central position, fallen upon one or other of the forces in front of him, and destroyed it before either of the remaining two could come to its assistance. But Suvorof knew that he had no counterpart on the other side, and he took a risk which was justified by the event. With Kosciusko the Poles had lost all the higher qualities of soldiers except courage.

With his own force Suvorof started on the night of



the 26th along the Warsaw road. Isayof, with 800 Cossacks and 10 squadrons of cavalry, pushed on 2 miles ahead of the main body. He had orders to attack the enemy at sight. Struggling through a great morass he came upon the Poles, more than 3000 strong, at daybreak. They lay between two woods a mile apart, both of which concealed marksmen and cannon, while the bulk of the infantry was arranged across the open space, with cavalry on the wings. Immediately behind their left the high road ran through the village of

Kobuilk, and through the forest in their rear led several tracks of inferior quality. Isayof fell upon the enemy from both flanks simultaneously. But the cross fire from the woods and the steadiness of the Polish infantry beat off his attack. Suvorof came up as he recoiled in disorder, saw how greatly he was outnumbered, and sent back instructions that the rest of the cavalry should hurry forward with all speed, and each unit should attack as soon as it reached the ground. Islyenyef charged on the left with his Cossacks, and Shevitch on the right with the regular horse, and the enemy, yielding to successive shocks, began at last to give ground. They adopted their usual close formation, and in two dense columns fell back along the roads through the woods. The sharpshooters in the wings were cut to pieces as they broke from the trees and attempted to join the main body, and the cannon were all taken.

The column formed by the troops of the right wing, about 1000 strong, moved at first towards the right, and then at a distance of a mile from the main body, parallel to the high road. It was followed by Islyenyef. The track was narrow, and the wood dense, and it was not until a large portion of the pursuers had been ordered to dismount and attack on foot that the enemy were at last brought to bay. By this time they had been driven round three sides of a square, and when the pursuing cavalry finally got ahead of them, they had almost reached the high road again, near the village of Viskovisk. A battalion of infantry after desperate exertions also succeeded in getting to close quarters with them, and a hand-to-hand fight in a small clearing ended in the complete dispersion of the retreating column. Leaving 200 dead and bringing back 30 prisoners and 2 guns, Islyenyef retired to join the Russian main forces, now hotly engaged further to the east with the second column of Poles. The fugitives among the trees thereupon attempted to re-form, but Islyenyef returning upon them compelled

the whole body to surrender. He brought back 380 prisoners in all. The fighting had been as fierce as any fighting between Poles and Russians. But this party of unfortunates had had little to eat for several days, and their captors, with characteristic Slav friendliness, shared their rations with them on the site of the first encounter.

The second column had made directly to the rear. It was pursued, like the first, by cavalry, followed by a battalion of infantry and four squadrons of dismounted dragoons. The high road was wide enough to allow the cavalry to attack with freedom. Some Cossacks and regular cavalry also succeeded in getting ahead of the column through the woods, and it was attacked by these simultaneously with the attack of the cavalry and infantry in the rear. Five squadrons sent by Islyenyef arrived in time to leap from their horses and plunge, sabre in hand, into the fray. For an hour a desperate fight raged all over the road and the open ground beside it. But the numbers were not unequal, the Russian horse was incomparably better than the Polish, and the infantry battalion, like all Suvorof's infantry, was terribly proficient with the bayonet. In the end, the second column suffered the fate of the first. It was driven into the woods in fragments, and the great majority of the men composing it were killed or wounded. Some 400 were taken prisoners at this point. Out of the two columns about 1000 prisoners remained.

The Russian losses in killed and wounded in all these hand-to-hand encounters were returned at much less than the Polish. The highest estimate places them at 200, only one-tenth of those of the Poles, even if allowance is made for the escape of a considerable number of fugitives among the woods.<sup>1</sup> Polish authorities claim that the Russian estimates of the number of Poles engaged in the battles of this war, and consequently of the numbers killed and wounded, are exaggerated.

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 219 *et seq.* ; Orlof, 64.

But there is nothing remarkable in the fact that the Polish losses were much greater than the Russian. Once the Polish artillery had ceased to be effective at Krupchitsa and Brest, the Russian superiority with the bayonet would be overwhelming, musketry being no more accurate on one side than the other. At Kobuilk the explanation of any disparity in casualties must be different. In this fight only two battalions of Russian infantry had succeeded in getting through the swamp, churned up as it was by the bodies of horse which had successively plunged through it, and the victory was largely due to dismounted cavalry. The *moral* of the Russians was no doubt better than that of the Poles, but the temper of both sides was very savage. The relations between these two races have always resembled those between English and Irish, and the fighting in this war was as merciless as in the Irish rebellion of 1798. The Poles always fought until the most desperate and uncalculating valour could fight no more, and under such circumstances it is not surprising that the beaten army suffered heavily. Their regular infantry and their artillery were incomparably superior in discipline and steadiness to those whom Suvorof had encountered in the first war. But the cavalry was bad, and seems to have relied upon its firearms rather than upon shock tactics. In the absence of good cavalry support the passive courage of the infantry was of little use against the Russian horse. Once the latter had burst through the screen of artillery fire, and the formation of the Polish infantry had been broken, the battle inevitably became a mere massacre.<sup>1</sup>

There remained the final task, the storm of the defences of Praga and the occupation of Warsaw. For this Suvorof prepared with some care. To ride over

<sup>1</sup> Suvorof himself wrote to Rumyantsov after the fight at Brest: "The Poles fought bravely, and our soldiers paid them for their stubbornness, giving no quarter." This is quoted by Pyetrushevski (second edition) at p. 316.



a line of earthworks defended by a numerous artillery was not so easy as to ride over an army in the open field. On the 25th Fersen returned from a fruitless march on Okunyef, and Derfelden, coming into touch with Suvorof on the same day, actually joined him on the 30th. The total strength of the Russian army was now about 25,000 men, with 86 field guns. The Poles had some 40,000 troops still in the field, but those actually available for the defence of Warsaw were not more numerous than the attacking force, and were not of such good quality as those which had suffered so heavily in the recent battles. Nevertheless they had prepared powerful defences. The suburb of Praga was divided from the main city by the unfordable Vistula, at this point about 450 yards wide, and round it had been thrown up a line of earthworks, strengthened in many places by redoubts and batteries, with lines of pot-holes along its front. Upon this the inhabitants of the city had worked with feverish energy. Women of the highest rank had carried stones with their own hands, and even the unhappy King, at last taking sides with his people against his patron, had thrown up a few handfuls of earth.<sup>1</sup> The position was formidable. To the south of Praga a tributary stream ran into the Vistula through an impassable marsh. The narrow angle between this marsh and the river was blocked with a wall and ditch, and on the opposite bank of the Vistula batteries were ready to open fire on the flank of a force advancing along the strip of dry ground. From the right bank of this stream ran the main line of earthworks and batteries, slightly diverging from the direction of the Vistula, until it reached the hill called Stony Hill. On this hill were placed two of the strongest batteries, and from it the line of works ran at right angles to the eastern face until it reached the river. The distance from the

<sup>1</sup> It is related that a woman begged Stanislaw to go away, because whatever he meddled with was sure to fail.

stream to the apex of the angle was about two miles, and from that to the river about one and a quarter. In some places there were two lines of trenches, and everywhere they were reinforced by "wolf holes," small pits with sharp stakes standing up at the bottom of them. The guns, 104 in number, were placed in batteries behind the wall and ditch, and within the angle a group of buildings known as the Menagerie was barricaded and loop-holed for defence. The houses of the suburb itself, for the most part poor cottages inhabited by Jews, were nowhere less than 500 yards from the batteries, and there was ample room for the movement of troops in the open space. Two bridges connected Praga with the city of Warsaw. Four villages outside the lines had been burnt to the ground, so as to afford a clear field of fire.<sup>1</sup>

Such a position might have been held by a resolute and well-equipped garrison, even against Suworof. But the Poles were not resolute, and their regular troops were not sufficient to hold the whole line. Within the city divided counsels weakened their resolution. The extreme democrats, headed by a priest named Kollontaj, resembled the French Jacobins, and threatened their own aristocratic leaders as much as their national enemy. The oligarchy paid for its monopoly of power by the loss of much of the support which it would have found in an enfranchised middle class. When all should have been thinking of nothing but duties, half the intelligent population was thinking of little but rights. Nor were the leaders of certain mind. Deprived of Kosciusko, almost the only prominent man in Poland who owed his position to his own merits and had inherited no feuds with his title, the nobles and the generals could come to no conclusion. Some urged an evacuation and a surrender of the town either to

<sup>1</sup> Some of the authorities say that there was only one bridge across the Vistula. I have accepted the view of Friedrich Schmidt in *Suin Otyetchestva* (1831), 39.

Suvorof or the King of Prussia, while others clamoured for a defence at all costs. General Tomas Vavrzhetski, who had reluctantly assumed Kosciusko's office without his power, wished to burn Praga to the ground and defend the line of the river. He was overruled, and the decision was taken to hold the defences of the suburb. These, it was supposed, would delay the Russians until the winter. They would then be compelled to retire and look for supplies, and the European situation might change in favour of the Poles. With this not very bright prospect before them, all the troops who could be spared were disposed along the line of earthworks, and among them were scattered some hundreds of devoted but untrained civilians. The total force was not more than 26,000 strong, the regular and partially trained soldiers being about 24,000.<sup>1</sup> All these were stationed close up to the works, and no provision was made for a general reserve. If the Russians broke through at any point, they would find no enemy between them and the bridges across the Vistula.

On the 29th Suvorof and all his principal officers reconnoitred the position,<sup>2</sup> and the troops were set to work upon the appliances necessary for a storm. On the same day some compliments were exchanged between the two sides, which afford a curious contrast with the ferocity of their mutual hatred. General Bishefski, who had been wounded and captured at Kobuilk, was sent into Warsaw for surgical treatment, and a Russian doctor, who had previously treated Valerian Zubof, was released by the Poles, so that he might go to Petersburg where the Favourite was lying ill. But General Zayontchek having demanded the return of Kosciusko's baggage in a tone which Suvorof thought insulting, the latter sent back his note with a stern warning that if

<sup>1</sup> Suvorof himself estimated the Poles at 30,000. I have adopted the figures of Schmidt, *op. cit.* 41.

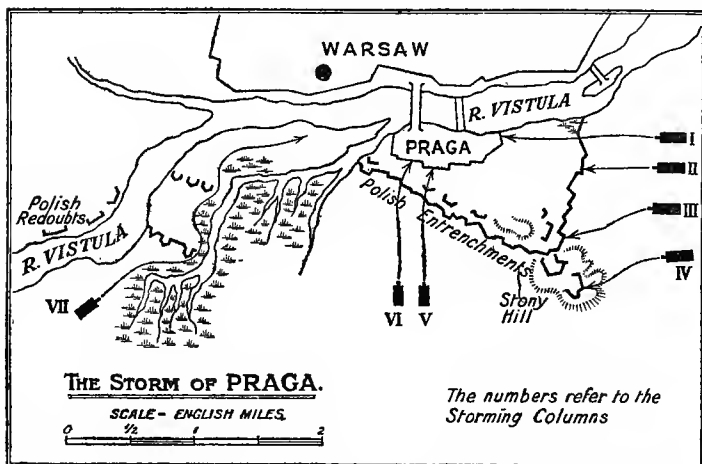
<sup>2</sup> The Poles fired vigorously on the Staff and their escort, and Islyenyef's horse was killed under him (*Campagnes*, ii. 231).

he resisted, he and all his men would be put to the sword.<sup>1</sup> On the 2nd November everything was ready, and the army, with banners displayed and music sounding, moved forward into the positions marked out for it. The enemy outposts were driven in, and the Russians occupied a line nearly five miles in length. Upon this a vigorous enemy would have made a sortie, and could hardly have failed to inflict heavy damage. But the Poles, surrendering the initiative to the other side, remained quietly in their entrenchments, and Suworof's preparations went on. Derfelden and Potyomkin, the nominal commander of Suworof's own detachment, lay opposite the northern face of the position, and Fersen opposite the eastern. During the night of the 2nd four batteries were thrown up. Two, mounting 48 guns, were placed in front of Fersen; one, with 16 guns, was to prepare Potyomkin's attack on Stony Hill; and the fourth, with 22 guns, was opposite the northern defences.

Next morning the batteries opened fire, and a brisk reply came from the Polish artillery. After another survey of the ground, Suworof decided to storm that night, relying upon surprise and the prowess of his troops to do what had previously seemed impossible to Fersen and his Prussian ally. Three of the columns were composed of Fersen's troops, all of them burning to avenge the losses which they had suffered in the streets of Warsaw, and Potyomkin and Derfelden provided two columns each. One of Fersen's columns was to attack between the marsh and the Vistula, enter Praga, and throw itself across the roads to the bridges. On the northern front, Derfelden's first column was to make straight for the bridges in the same way. The fourth column, part of Potyomkin's force, was to attack Stony Hill. For the others were indicated various parts of the wall and ditch. In advance of each column 128 marksmen were to clear the wall of

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 231 *et seq.*

the enemy, behind them came 272 pioneers with fascines and ladders, then 30 men with picks and spades, and behind all the infantry. Some of the cavalry had been dismounted to complete the reserves of Derfelden's second column and both columns of Potyomkin, in support of the actual storming parties. But a mounted reserve also followed each column, and as soon as the wall was seized it was to be broken down, so as to allow this reserve to enter with the field artillery,



complete the overthrow of the enemy in Praga, and threaten Warsaw itself from the river bank. The attack was to begin at 4.30 in the morning, but the two columns of Fersen's which were to attack the main entrenchment were ordered to start half an hour later, in the belief that Potyomkin's attack on Stony Hill would draw off part of the troops from the eastern face.<sup>1</sup>

At 7 o'clock on the night of the 3rd detailed instructions were read out to all the troops. After

<sup>1</sup> See the detailed instructions of Suvorof, set out in *Campaignes*, ii. 235 ; Orlof, 78 *et seq.*

describing the positions and duties of the different arms the instructions proceeded in thoroughly Suvorovian style :

When we advance, the troops must move quietly, not speak a word, and not shoot.

Getting up to the wall, they are to rush forward quickly, and at the word of command shout "Hurra!"

The ditch reached, without losing a second, throw your fascine into it, leap on to it, and put the ladder up against the wall ; the marksmen to shoot the enemy down one by one—smartly, quickly, get up two by two ! the ladder short ? Bayonet into the wall—climb on to it, after him another and a third. Comrade help comrade ! Up on the wall, thrust the enemy off with the bayonet, and in a twinkling form up beyond the wall.

Don't bother about firing ; don't fire without need ; beat the enemy and push him with the bayonet ; work quickly, sharply, bravely, Russianly ! Support your own men, in a body ; don't leave your officers. Keep the front.

Don't run about into houses ; give quarter to the enemy who ask for it ; don't strike the unarmed ; don't fight with women ; don't touch boys and girls.

To those of us who die the Kingdom of Heaven ; to the living glory, glory, glory ! <sup>1</sup>

At 5 o'clock the signal rockets went up, and the columns moved swiftly forward. From the Polish lines were heard the confused hum of moving and talking men, and, nearer and more distinct, the cries of the sentries. But the Poles had not expected an attack so soon, and it was only by chance that Vavrzhetski had come over to Praga at 4 o'clock. The sudden outbreak of firing along the northern defences was his first warning of the peril in which he stood, and soon afterwards the leaders of Derfelden's first column were

<sup>1</sup> Starkof, 45. Suvorof gave special instructions to Fersen's men, just before the actual storm. Among these was an order to give freedom and a written pass to any man who laid down his arms, Pyetrush. ii. 109.

clambering over the parapet at the point where it began to run down steeply to the bed of the river. This column was led by the General Lassii, who had distinguished himself at Izmail, and he was as successful on this occasion as on the first. An attempt by the Polish cavalry to disperse his infantry was frustrated by the timely arrival of two Russian squadrons. His infantry reserve came up on his left, and the artillerymen, who had been battering this part of the defences, chafing at their enforced inactivity, hauled their guns across the lines and opened fire at point-blank range on the Polish emplacements. Driving the enemy before them, the infantry pushed through the streets of the suburb and seized the head of the nearest bridge.

The second and third columns had a comparatively easy task. They swarmed over the defences and took the batteries in the rear. Some Polish horse threatened an attack, but a grenadier battalion charged them with the bayonet, and they turned and fled. These two columns then made for the bridges. The fourth column, attacking Stony Hill, met with more difficulty. The fire from the guns and musketry was at this point very fierce. Nevertheless, throwing away their fascines, the men swarmed over the wolf holes and the palisade, and carried the batteries beyond with the bayonet. The slaughter here was great, and of a battalion of 500 Jews, which fought with the greatest courage, not a single man survived.

As had been expected, the furious fighting at the angle of the defences sensibly lightened the task of the two columns attacking the eastern face. Fersen's men got quickly over the trenches, and drove the enemy through the streets of Praga towards the bridges. The seventh column turned the Polish detached line between its left wing and the marsh, some of the men plunging into the water up to their waists, and the defenders fell back hurriedly. Their retreat was cut off by the cavalry, and they were driven back into the narrow

angle formed by the bank of the river and the marshy stream. There, in full view of the inhabitants of Warsaw, they maintained for a short time a desperate resistance. But at last, when many had been killed and some drowned in attempting to escape by swimming, the rest laid down their arms. About 1300 prisoners were taken at this point, and rather more were killed or drowned. The victors then dashed on with all speed, crossed the stream and joined with the first and fifth columns at the bridges. These were set on fire, and the retreat of the rest of the defenders was altogether cut off.

It was now day, and the Poles had been completely defeated. Vavrzhetski had escaped, forcing his way across a bridge through a mass of fugitives, but some thousands of men remained penned in the streets, unable to advance or retreat, falling at every moment under the pitiless fire of the Russian artillery or the bayonets or sabres of the troops who now pressed in from every side. There took place one of those scenes which sometimes remind even historians of the essential beastliness of war. It will never be known whether soldiers or civilians first fired from the houses. But the Russians found themselves assailed with every sort of missile, fired or flung from the windows or the roofs, and in defiance of Suworof's express orders, no less than of the ordinary dictates of humanity, they began an indiscriminate massacre. Soldiers and civilians, men, women, and children, perished wretchedly. There was no escape to Warsaw. Some had crossed the bridges before the approaches were cut. Others were less fortunate. They took to boats, but these were overcrowded, and some sank with all on board. A few people tried to swim across and were drowned. Suworof, seeing that the men had got completely out of hand, sent an officer into the town to urge the civilian inhabitants to flee towards the Russian camp, and many escaped in this way. But a large number died amongst



the ruins of Praga. The burning bridges set fire to the houses, and a great part of the suburb was burnt to ashes. The whole scene of slaughter, with the glare and roar of the flames and the stifling smoke, the stamping, shouting combatants, and the yells and screams of the women and children as the raving savages fell upon them in places from which there was no escape, made an impression upon the minds of the Polish nation that will never be effaced.

It is easy to provide explanations, or even partial excuses. Many of the victors had not long before barely escaped with their lives from the pitiless pursuit of the Warsaw mob. The custom of the time allowed plunder after a storm, and plunder always leads to murder. The soldiers, fighting in a narrow street, and suddenly attacked from behind, behaved like wild beasts out of fear. The numbers of the victims were in any case exaggerated. This is true enough, and there have been similar episodes in the history of most European armies of the same or even later date. Nevertheless, the storm of Praga, though a bold feat of arms, remains a blot on the fame of the Russian troops and their leader. Suvorof had given express orders that no violence should be done to women and children. But his account of the storm contains no reference to the unnecessary horrors which accompanied it, and it is not recorded that he addressed any rebuke to the guilty troops. On the other hand, admitting the brutality of the troops and the impotence of Suvorof to check it, the storm of Praga was not as bad as it has been represented by contemporary or recent enemies of Russia. The Russian soldier, like other Slavs, will kill, in the heat of battle, anything that gets in his way. But there is no race, except the Jewish, with which he would not rather eat and drink than fight. The atrocities committed at Praga were local and temporary, and the slaughter was not continued after the battle. The Polish army lost about 10,000 killed,

and the prisoners, wounded and unwounded, were about 12,000.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of killed is frightfully high. But this was the last battle of the war. Putting aside the question where the right lay between Russians and Poles, Suvorof was right in claiming that one massacre which ends a rebellion is better than the long-protracted killing which goes on during guerilla warfare. But posterity, which acquits him of mere lust for blood, does not put aside the major question, and the States which bear the guilt of originating the war must answer for every act of each of their ministers.

Even before the last of the defenders of Praga had laid down their arms, the Russian cannon were firing across the river into Warsaw itself, and one shell killed the secretary of the Council of the Republic during a sitting of the Council. The whole city was in a panic, and a stream of vehicles and foot passengers poured out from the western gates. The inhabitants demanded a capitulation, the King supported them, and even Vavrzhetski, who was still for a prolongation of the war, consented to abandon the defence of the capital. A deputation was therefore sent by the City Government to Suvorof. In the early hours of the morning, in a boat followed so far as the darkness would permit by the anxious gaze of an enormous crowd, the representatives of the citizens crossed the river. After some delay, they were brought to Suvorof, who was sitting on a log of wood in front of his tent, with his sword across his knees. They approached with hesitation. Seeing their doubt, he leaped to his feet, flung away his sword, cried out in Polish, "Peace, peace!" and embraced them. The deputies threw themselves on their knees before him, but he raised them and led them into his tent, where he offered them wine and zakuski.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Orlof, 66 *et seq.* ; Starkof, 43 *et seq.* ; Schmidt, *op. cit.* ; *Campaignes*, ii. 235 *et seq.* ; "Memoirs of Denisof" in *Russ. Star.* (1874), ii. Suvorof's account of the storm is set out in Orlof, 113 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Zakuski are the miscellaneous sardines, smoked fish, pickles, and so forth by which Russians stimulate their appetites before a large

poor men were utterly overcome by these actions on the part of such a terrible enemy, and more than one of them burst into tears. The negotiations were brief. The terms finally arranged were that all arms and cannon were to be deposited in a suitable place outside the city; the bridges were to be repaired at once and the Russians admitted; all Poles were to be dismissed to their homes, with all their private property untouched, immediately after laying down their arms; the King was to receive royal honours; the civilian inhabitants were to receive no injury in persons or goods or other property; the Russians were to enter the city the same day, or the day after, if a bridge was not ready sooner.

These terms lacked nothing of generosity, and the deputies returned to the anxious crowd on the other bank. The boats approached at full speed, and the cries of "Peace, peace!" which the excited messengers began to utter were taken up and answered by the populace with the wildest enthusiasm. The deputies were snatched from the boats and carried up the bank with shouts. But this was only the attitude of the citizens. The military men were made of fiercer stuff. Vavrzhetski refused to give up his arms. On the morning of the 7th, the deputies started again on their anxious journey. Suvorof refused to abate his terms, except to say that he would not enter the town until the 9th, and his own men would help to repair the bridge. If the Polish army would not give up its arms, it must evacuate the city without delay. After this announcement, he ordered Fersen and Derfelden to cross the Vistula in boats above Warsaw, and prepare to cut off the retreat of Vavrzhetski. He had to postpone his entry still further, and finally agreed that it should not take place until the 12th November. But before dawn on the 9th came an earnest request that

meal. They are eaten by the guests standing at a side-table, or even in an ante-room.

he should lead his men in at the earliest possible moment. Already the irreconcilables were restive, and even the King might soon be in danger. The triumphal entry was actually made on the 10th, after the bulk of the Polish military stores had been successfully removed. Suvorof, wearing a plain uniform, and without his Orders, received the city keys and bread and salt at the Warsaw end of the bridge. Russian authorities speak of the cheering crowds in the streets, the shouts for Catherine and Suvorof, and the tears which sprang to his eyes as he thanked God that he had not had to deal with Warsaw as he had dealt with Praga. All this is true enough, and it was not Suvorof's way to abuse a victory. But there has always been a noble soldier to do the work of a bad cause, and posterity will not allow one example of personal magnanimity to dull its memory of Praga and the Second Partition. Suvorof represented the strength, but not the policy of Russia, and the Poles who remained at home and cursed, or trudged out of the city in the train of Vavrzhetski and Dombrovski, understood what had happened better than those who crowded the streets to welcome him into Warsaw.

In dealing with popular risings of this kind there is one cardinal error which may be committed by a Government: the excessive application of force. Suvorof, or rather Suvorof's army, had already been guilty of a massacre of innocent people, and this could not be forgotten. But he refrained from the additional folly of courts-martial, executions, and oppressive fines, and observed the golden rule, not to do anything which it would afterwards be out of his power to undo. Very much to the disgust of the aristocracy of Petersburg, he made no forced levy upon the inhabitants of Warsaw, proclaimed a general amnesty, and gave a free pass to any soldier who laid down his arms at any moment before battle was joined.<sup>1</sup> At the personal request

<sup>1</sup> *Voronts. Arch.* xii. 142, 384.

of King Stanislaw he released one of the officers taken at Praga, and of his own free will released 500 others, sending the order after the convoy of prisoners, which was already well on its way to Kief.<sup>1</sup> The news of the general amnesty was more destructive of the Polish army than even such bloody defeats as they had already sustained at the hands of Suvorof. Some units surrendered on being overtaken by Russian troops, others did not wait for a summons. Pickets disappeared, scouts never returned from their expeditions, artillerymen and waggoners cut their traces and galloped off with their horses. In ten days after the Russian entry into Warsaw even the detachments of irreconcilables like Vavrzhetski and Dombrovski had melted away. By the 1st December thirty thousand free passes, given on the sole condition that the bearers went quietly to their homes, had completed the work of Kobrin, Brest, Kobuilk, and Praga. The Polish insurrection was at an end, and the Polish State with it.

Rewards were showered upon the conqueror. After the victory at Brest, Catherine had presented him with a diamond-embroidered ribbon for his hat, and three pieces of cannon out of those which he had captured. After the capture of Praga she sent him a field-marshal's baton studded with jewels, and valued at 15,000 roubles, and endowed him with an estate and 7000 serfs, part of the property of the unhappy King of Poland. She wrote to him at the same time that she never promoted any man except in order of seniority, "but you, by your own exploits, have made yourself Field Marshal."<sup>2</sup> The King of Prussia sent him the Orders of the Red and the Black Eagles, and the Emperor his portrait set in jewels. The receipt of the long-coveted rank of Field-Marshal filled him with delight, and his high spirits broke out as usual into extravagance. On the day on which he went to church to return thanks for

<sup>1</sup> *Campaignes*, ii. 280.

<sup>2</sup> *State Archives*, v. 116; printed in *Russ. Star.* (1892), lxxiv. 37.

his promotion, he set a number of stools in a row, and in the presence of his officers leapt over them one after the other, saying "Over Ryepnin—over Saltikof—over Prozorovski"—reciting with each leap the name of some senior general, whom he had passed in the race for promotion. After this he put on his new uniform and all his orders, and went solemnly to church.<sup>1</sup> The most interesting, and probably the most gratifying of all these honours was the tobacco-box presented to him by the town of Warsaw itself, with the inscription "Warsaw to her deliverer." This was no doubt the gift of the owners of property, who felt that only Suvorof stood between them and Jacobinism. The economic state of that country may be imagined, where foreign conquest seems less terrible than domestic revolution.

Two things are necessary for suppressing national risings: unhesitating energy in the military operations, and the most ostentatious clemency immediately armed resistance is at an end. Complete success may not always be achieved with these, but it will never be achieved without them. So far as Suvorof was free to act according to his own judgement, he had done well. He had spared the conquered, while striking down the arrogant. He had had the opportunity of behaving like one of Plutarch's heroes, and he had used it with delight. But the Empress and her advisers were less magnanimous. On the 2nd December he received detailed instructions for levying a contribution upon Warsaw, the arrest of the leaders of the April rising, and the confiscation of public archives and property, including the famous Zaluski Library. The contribution was not levied, but the plunder and a few prisoners were sent to Petersburg, where the books formed the nucleus of the great Imperial Library. It

<sup>1</sup> This anecdote is told by many contemporaries, including De Ségur, who says the scene took place "in church." His promotion offended not a few of these rivals, and the complaints of one of them were so loud that he was dismissed from the service. *Voronts. Arch.* xii. 144.

was also by Imperial orders that Derfelden harried the private estates of Prince Czartoryski, a large quantity of books, pictures, and furniture being wantonly destroyed. These systematic outrages, and the indiscriminate plundering, which marked and marks the presence of every Russian army in a foreign country, undid much of the good work done by Suvorof's clemency, and the conquest of 1794 remained the bitterest of Polish memories until obliterated by the still greater savagery of 1868.

☛ Suvorof's fame was now European. The Turkish wars had concerned only the statesmen of Western Europe, the overthrow of Poland aroused the interest, and often the sympathy, of the peoples. The conqueror was most often represented in an unfavourable light. Thus a caricature of the English Rowlandson represents him as a monster, introducing to his Imperial mistress a train of slaves bearing dishes full of the heads of massacred Polish women and children. Those foreign visitors, who knew his private enemies better than himself, took the worst possible view of his unpolished manners and his fantastic appearance, as well as of his military performances. One writes of him, after his return to Petersburg, as

A little old man, wizened and crooked, who crosses the rooms of the Palace with a one-footed skip, or runs and gambols in the streets, followed by a troop of children, to whom he throws apples to make them fight, crying himself "I'm Suvorof! I'm Suvorof!" If the foreigner has difficulty in recognising in this old mad man the conqueror of the Turks and the Poles, it will not be difficult for him to suspect in these wild and haggard eyes and this horrible foaming mouth, the cut-throat of Praga. Suvorof would be merely the most ridiculous of buffoons, if he had not shown himself the most barbarous of warriors. He is a monster, whose monkey body holds the soul of a butcher's dog. Attila, his countryman and perhaps his ancestor, was neither so lucky nor so savage. His vulgar and farcical

behaviour has inspired the soldiers with blind confidence, which served him instead of military talents, and was the real cause of his successes. . . . He sheds blood by instinct, like the tiger. . . . His exploits in Poland are those of a brigand. He massacred the remains of an army already defeated by Fersen and deprived of the gallant Kosciusko, who gave it all its strength. Suvorof, embracing the inhabitants of Warsaw, and granting them pardon over the corpses of twenty thousand citizens of every age and every sex, resembles a satiated tiger, who plays with his prey over the offal of his den. . . . This cruel man has nevertheless some virtues . . . he values money as little as human blood. . . . Such is the too celebrated Suvorof.<sup>1</sup>

This is obviously a clever distortion of the truth. Popular feeling always requires a hero or a villain. It cannot spend itself sufficiently on causes and institutions. The man who had done most in the field to throw Poland under the feet of her oppressors was thus made responsible for all their crimes. Many other incidents, carefully preserved from these Warsaw days, give a more accurate picture of him. The comic is there, though the monstrous is not. His overwhelming successes, his honours, his unbounded authority, and his opportunities of displaying magnanimity to the fallen, gave Suvorof perpetual pleasure, and his high spirits as usual found vent in all sorts of freaks.<sup>2</sup> These stories are from the notes of one of his own officers.<sup>3</sup>

Soon after his arrival at Warsaw, the Duc de Polignac<sup>4</sup> called upon him. Suvorof kept him waiting an hour in the ante-room, then popped out of his cabinet, bent

<sup>1</sup> Masson, *Mémoires, etc., sur la Russie*, 310 *et seq.* The malicious innuendo "to make them fight" is a very artistic addition to the doubtless accurate description of Suvorof throwing apples to children in the streets.

<sup>2</sup> As one admirer in Petersburg put it: "Suvorof covers himself with glory in Warsaw. He won't stop playing the fool. But that apart, he's a marvel." (*Voronts. Arch.* xii. 144.)

<sup>3</sup> *Reminiscences of Engelhardt.*

<sup>4</sup> Duke Jules de Polignac, Postmaster-General of Louis XVI. He emigrated in 1789, and received an estate in the Ukraine from Catherine.



double, with his hands on his stomach, and crying out, "Oh! this damned colic! It's kept you waiting an hour!" Then they began to talk. All went well until De Polignac discreetly but unwisely expectorated into his handkerchief. Suvorof immediately leapt away with a shriek, "Oh! Oh!" and began to clear his throat loudly and spit on the floor. His body-servant Proshka solemnly presented De Polignac with a clean handkerchief, taking the dirty one away, while another servant paraded the room burning incense. De Polignac looked at this performance with perfect composure, and Suvorof, delighted to find him made of such sturdy material, began to treat him affectionately, and they remained fast friends.

At a morning service Suvorof suddenly cried out, "A stink! a stink!" His adjutant, Count Stolipin, knowing that he must do something at once, walked round the Church, found a dirty old woman in the porch, ordered her to be taken out, and returned. "Well?" asked Suvorof. "Dirty old woman, Your Excellency," was the reply. "Pah! beastly!" and he was quiet for the rest of the service. Unfortunately, his general adjutants Tishtshenko and Tikhonovski told him, after the service, that the smell really came from the soldiers and not from the old woman. Stolipin had lied to keep him quiet. After dinner Stolipin, as usual, brought the Field Marshal his glass of vodka. Suvorof refused to drink, and said to his neighbour, "He's fooling me; says 'water.'"<sup>1</sup> Stolipin thereupon loudly repeated, "Vodka, Your Excellency!" "Ha!" said Suvorof, "he's angry"; and he refused again to drink. "Fooling me, fooling me." Stolipin, really annoyed, declared that he was forbidden by his patent of nobility to tell lies. But the old man only repeated, "Angry, angry," and Stolipin retired in high dudgeon. This scene was repeated, according to the narrator, every day for several weeks.

<sup>1</sup> The Russian word for water is *voda*.

The officer who has preserved these stories was himself the unhappy victim of one of their hero's outbreaks. He was dining with Suvorof, and was rash enough to smile at the punctiliousness with which the vodka was handed round to the guests in order of seniority. Suvorof leaped up, screaming, "He stinks, he stinks!" and fled into another room. They opened a window, but all in vain. Suvorof continued, "Stinks, stinks!" Then at last, "There's a skunk at the table!" The adjutant understood. He approached the guest, explained that he was wearing dirty boots, and must go out and clean them. The officer took the hint and went home.

Another subordinate gives a picture of Suvorof at an inspection of troops during his survey of his district in August 1795. Two regiments of cavalry and one of infantry lay at Nemirov, on the Bug. About midday Suvorof appeared on horseback, accompanied by three staff officers and a Cossack. He galloped in among the infantry, resting after their dinner, and called for a veteran drummer, "Yakof Vassilyevitch Kislyakof!" The drummer ran up, and Suvorof ordered him to beat the alarm. The men fell in, and were promptly marched off towards the river. Cavalry and infantry plunged in and crossed, the footmen up to their shoulders in the water. On the other side they marched ten miles, Suvorof still at their head, and then carried out a sham fight. There followed a speech from Suvorof, with some quotations from his *Science of Victory*, and a rebuke to the commander of one of the cavalry regiments for some defects in the housing of his men. Then he chatted with his old acquaintances in the ranks, praised the units which had distinguished themselves in the campaign, bade farewell, and galloped away.<sup>1</sup>

But there was no period in Suvorof's military career in which he was so little occupied with military affairs as during his occupation of Poland. His hold over

<sup>1</sup> Starkof.

his troops became in fact rather slack, and there is considerable evidence of peculation and want of discipline among his officers.<sup>1</sup> He was engaged in the despatch to Petersburg of the wretched King of Poland, the political prisoners, and the Imperial and military plunder. His correspondence with Khvostof shows him as more cheerful than might have been expected, speculating about the chances of service in an Austrian expedition against France, and worrying most about the blot on his own honour involved in the prolonged confinement of Kosciusko and his companions. At the end of October 1795 an Imperial rescript summoned him back to Petersburg. Nothing was left to do but partition Poland. The hunter had brought down the quarry, and the scullions could cut it up without his help.

Avoiding ceremony, and taking great pains to avoid triumphal receptions by the way, he set out in his plain carriage. One scene deserves to be recorded here. On the first or second night after he left Warsaw he found quarters prepared for him in a little house. The guest room had the usual big stove in it, and the responsible officer had forgotten to turn out the old woman who was accustomed, in Russian fashion, to sleep on the top of the stove. Suvorof in due course entered, stripped himself naked, splashed himself with cold water, and began to prance about the room, reciting at the top of his voice, and in the original tongue, some verses from the Koran. At this point the old woman became aware that something was going on. Seeing the strange sight, and hearing the strange sound, she concluded that she was in the presence of the Devil himself, and ejaculated, with pious terror, "Avaunt! The Heavenly powers are with us!" Suvorof, on his part, was hardly less frightened by this sudden yell from the stove, and shouted with equal force. Help came, the old woman was removed, and the Terror of the Turks and the Poles

<sup>1</sup> See, *e.g.*, the Memoirs of Denisof and Engelhardt.

recovered his self-possession and went to sleep.<sup>1</sup> But for this incident his journey was unexciting.

On the 15th January 1796 he reached Petersburg, where the Empress received him with special marks of distinction. He was lodged in the Taurid Palace, the large, dull edifice which Catherine had presented to Potyomkin. In deference to his peculiar tastes, all the mirrors were draped with cloth, and a straw mattress was laid on the floor in his bedroom. His usual plainness of manners went with his usual elaboration of Court etiquette, and the great woman must sometimes have been embarrassed by his profound obeisances and fervent professions of loyalty.<sup>2</sup> But she showed him every possible kindness. At his request she made Khvostof a Gentleman-in-Waiting, and when somebody suggested that the honour was not deserved, she replied : " If Suvorof had asked for it, I should have made him a Lady-in-Waiting." <sup>3</sup> At a ball at the Winter Palace she asked him, " How am I to treat so dear a guest ? " " Blessed Empress," was the answer, " a drop of vodka." " *Fi donc !* " said Her Majesty, " what will the Ladies-in-Waiting say when they talk to you ? " " They will feel, little mother, that they're talking to a soldier." She gave him the vodka, and he drank her health. Then he knelt before her, and cried out : " Your Majesty's condescension makes me your slave. I will die for my mother Catherine ! " " Live," said she very properly, " for the glory of your country." <sup>4</sup>

On another occasion he entered her room and prostrated himself three times before the ikon; then, turning round, made the same obeisance to her. She did her best to prevent him. " Mercy, Alexander Vassilyevitch," she exclaimed, " what are you doing ? " And she raised him and seated him beside her.

<sup>1</sup> I have not found the authority for this anecdote. Pyetrushevski assumes its truth, and I have copied it from him.

<sup>2</sup> *Istoricheskiĭ Vyesnik* (1900), lxxx. 526.

<sup>3</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1900), li. 573.

<sup>4</sup> Fuchs, *Misc.* 107.

"Mother," he cried, "after God, you are my only hope."<sup>1</sup> Catherine could not endure very much of this sort of thing, and her willingness to find work for Suvorof at a distance from the Court was perhaps encouraged by Platon Zubof. This young man, considering that the favourite of Catherine was not the inferior of any of her subjects, treated the conqueror of Praga with familiarity. When he paid a formal visit to the Taurid Palace, Suvorof determined to put him in his right place, and received him in his shirt.<sup>2</sup> After a few weeks of Court life, which he made as uncomfortable as possible for the Court, he left Petersburg, to take up his next command, in the Governments of Vratslav, Voznyesensk, Yekaterinoslav, Kharkof, and the Crimea. In the middle of March he reached his headquarters at Tultchin.

Here he remained for some months, fighting with his usual enemies—excessive sickness, arrears of pay, desertions, bad feeding, and bad housing of the troops. His chief object was to get an army into good condition for the approaching war with France. But the designation of Platon Zubof as commander of a Persian expedition aroused all his old jealousy, and the faithful Khvostof received the usual letters, but rather more sarcastic and less clamorously complaining than before. The same correspondence shows that he was making occasionally gifts of money to poor relations, officers in needy circumstances, and other less deserving acquaintances. Egoism and generosity as usual flourished in him together, and there is in existence a letter from his nephew, Count Alexyei Gortchakof, to Khvostof, which shows the young man busily engaged in flattering his petulant and jealous old uncle, making himself indispensable to him, and getting two promotions in three years without any particular merits or services. When he was not thinking of his own

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1892), lxiii. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Otyetchestvenniya Zapiski* (1841), 1.

wrongs, Suvorof could be lavish in gifts of money and was ready enough to get jobs for his relations and friends. His own work was thoroughly done, and it was at Tultchin that his system of military training was brought to perfection.

At one moment in this period he came into contact with Grimm. At the latter's request Suvorof sent him a silhouette portrait. The portrait was enclosed in a letter overflowing with those precepts which ran so easily down the writer's pen.

I ought in everything to tread in the steps of your Excellency's wisdom, so renowned in Europe. The immortality of learning brings it nearer than all else to the divine. Its influence raises us to the loftiest heights of well-doing. It inspires in us the noble and sacred resolution to live for the common good. From it we study not to think of self, to scorn the vicissitudes of fortune, and to sacrifice ourselves for country and mankind.

Praise to the Lord of Hosts ! I shall acquit myself according to your rules.<sup>1</sup>

In his work with his men he showed himself not inconsistent with these lofty sentiments. It was in 1796 that he cast into its final form his famous *Näuka Pobyezhdät* or *Science of Victory*, containing those principles which were to him the Alpha and the Omega of the art of war. This little book is of great importance, not only because it explains Suvorof's own method, but because it has been the foundation of all Russian military training since his death. Dragomirof, the brain of the Russian army during the Japanese War, was an avowed disciple of Suvorof, and the heroic struggles in the Carpathians and Armenia during the recent war were carried on in the spirit of the same tradition. It is in the *Science of Victory*, first sketched in the Polish War, and elaborated during the drills

<sup>1</sup> This was copied by Grimm, and is printed in the *Correspondence of Catherine II. with Grimm*, 274.

and sham fights of Tultchin, that we find the rules for converting mobs of illiterate peasants into soldiers capable of almost incredible feats of physical strength and endurance.<sup>1</sup>

The dominant principle is to teach the soldier to go and meet danger and not to wait for it. Rules for retreat find no place in the book ; every instruction, directly or indirectly, bears upon movement in the direction of the enemy. It is divided into two parts. The first, entitled *Wachtparad*, consists of technical terms of drill and their explanation. The second, *Verbal Instruction of the Troops*, is a collection of rules, maxims, aphorisms, and exhortations, directed towards the moral inspiration rather than the technical training of the soldier. This second part deserves extensive quotation. It is a complete exposition of Suvorof's military creed.

Boots close together, knees pressed ; the soldiers stand like a needle ; I see the fourth man, not the fifth.

The military step is a yard, in deploying a yard and a half ; keep your distance.

The soldier in front on the march dresses by the elbow, three paces from rank to rank ; on the march, two ; no bother with drums.

Keep a bullet for three days, sometimes for a whole campaign, when there's no need to use it. Shoot rarely, and when you do, aim ; with the bayonet strike hard ; the bullet misses, the bayonet doesn't miss ; the bullet's a fool, the bayonet's a fine lad.

Strike once—throw the pagan from your bayonet ; dead on your bayonet, one strikes at your neck with his sword. Sword at your neck—jump back a pace, hit again, strike another, strike a third ; a champion will kill half-a-dozen, and I have seen more. Keep the bullet in your musket ; three leap at you—knock down the first, shoot the second, do in the third with the bayonet.

<sup>1</sup> The book was first published by Antonovski in 1805, and has been several times reprinted. It is set out in full in Pyetrush. ii. 455 *et seq.*

Never pull up during an attack.

Fuse in the grape-shot—throw yourself at the grape-shot ; it flies over your head ; the guns are yours, the men are yours—halt on the spot, chase, strike, give quarter to the survivors ; it's a sin to kill without need, they're only men like you.

Die for the Royal House, for your Little Mother, for the most famous House ; the Church will pray God for you. To him who survives, honour and glory.

Don't hurt civilians, they give us food and drink ; a soldier is not a footpad. Booty is sacred ; take a camp, and all is yours ; take a fortress, and all is yours. In Izmail, besides that, they shared gold and silver in handfuls ; and so in many places.

Without orders no going after plunder.

There follow brief descriptions of different " battles " ; battle on the field, battle in the trenches.

The ditch isn't deep, the wall isn't high ; fling yourself into the ditch ; leap over the wall, charge with the bayonet, strike, chase, take prisoner.

Storm.

The enemy runs into the town, turn his guns against him, fire hard down the streets, keep up a lively bombardment ; go after him at once . . . the enemy surrenders, spare him ; the walls occupied, after the plunder.

The three military arts. First—Apprehension,<sup>1</sup> how to arrange things in camp, how to march, how to attack, pursue, and strike ; for taking up position, final judgement of the enemy's strength, for estimating his intentions.

Second—Quickness. . . .

There followed detailed instructions for marches, with necessary halts every six miles, four hours' rest midday and six or eight at night.

<sup>1</sup> The Russian word *glazomir* means literally "eye-measure." The French *coup d'œil* comes near it, but there is no exact English translation.



This quickness doesn't weary the men. The enemy doesn't expect us, reckons us 100 versts away, and if a long way off to begin with—200, 300 or more—suddenly we're on him, like snow on the head; his head spins. Attack with what comes up, with what God sends; the cavalry to begin, smash, strike, cut off, don't let slip, hurra!

Brothers do miracles.

Third—Attack. Leg supports leg, arm strengthens arm; many men will die in the volley; the enemy has the same weapons, but he doesn't know the Russian bayonet. Extend the line—attack at once with cold steel; extend the line without stopping. . . . The Cossacks to get through everywhere. . . . In two lines is strength; in three, half as much again; the first breaks, the second drives into heaps, the third overthrows.

Then follow some improvisations on his favourite theme, the terrors of military hospitals.

Fear the hospital—German drugs are deadly at a distance; utterly useless and harmful; the Russian soldier is not used to them; we have in our own stores roots, herbs, grasses. A soldier is precious; be careful of your health; clear out your bowels if you're stopped up; hunger's the best remedy. Who doesn't look after his men—for the officer arrest; for the sergeant and corporal the horse; and the horse for every one who doesn't look after himself. . . . Remember, men, the field medicine of Staff Surgeon Byelopolski; in fever eat nothing for twelve days, and drink soldier's kvass, which is also a remedy; and in ague neither eat nor drink—punishment for whoever doesn't look after himself. . . . In the camp, sick and weak; invalids in huts, not in villages—better air. . . . No need to regret money spent on drugs, if there's anywhere to buy them. . . . But all that is unimportant, we'll understand how to look after ourselves; where one man in a hundred dies, we shall lose less in a month out of five hundred. . . .

Champions, the enemy trembles at us, but there is another enemy . . . the damned can't-tell-er, hinter, guesser, white-liar, smooth-tongue, gossip, double-

meaner, sleek-talker, thickhead. . . . From the can't-tell-er come many disasters. For the can't-tell officer arrest, and for the staff officer from the chief downwards confinement to quarters.<sup>1</sup>

The soldier's duty is to be healthy, brave, hard, resolute, truthful, honourable. Pray to God—from Him is victory. Demigods, God leads us, He is our general.

Study is light, idleness darkness; the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and if the peasant doesn't know how to work his plough, the corn doesn't grow. One trained man is worth three untrained; three's too little for us; give us six, give us ten to one—we shall beat them all, crowd them up, take them prisoners. In the last campaign the enemy lost 75,000 men by count, just not 100,000; he fought cleverly and desperately, but we didn't lose a full thousand. There, brothers, is the training of a soldier; gentlemen officers, what a triumph!

Finally come the words to be spoken at the dismissal from parade, after the necessary praise or blame of the behaviour of the troops. They are

Subordination, discipline, cleanliness, health, neatness, bravery, daring, courage, victory, glory, glory, glory!

This Suvorovian war gospel is a priceless document, and explains both leader and followers at once. The simple Russian peasant was not a fit subject for instruction in complicated movements. But his incomparable patience and docility made him as clay in the hands of the potter to a commander who could win his affection and his trust, and when well led he would go forward as long as he could move one foot before the other. He

<sup>1</sup> His hatred of the "can't-tell-er" (*nyemoguznaik*) was unquenchable. He was continually putting questions to officers and men, and cared little about the absurdity of the answer, so long as it was prompt. "If he asked you, 'Where's Calcutta?' you might answer, 'On the Mississippi,' and so long as it came smartly he would think you a splendid fellow and embrace you with all his heart" ("Memoirs of Theodor G. Golovkin," in *Istor. Vvestnik* (1900), lxxx. 537). There are countless stories on this subject, most of them of the "well-found" kind.

was a bad marksman, and at Kinburn Suvorof had had to denounce shooting without aim, and especially shooting from the rear rank over the heads of the men in front. The man who fired away his ammunition too fast was threatened with the penalty of running the gauntlet.<sup>1</sup> But in bayonet fighting the immobility of the Russian soldier made him most formidable. "In every case," said Suvorof at Kinburn, "the most damaging of our weapons is our terrible bayonet, with which our soldiers are incomparably the best in the world."<sup>2</sup> It was not the least valuable quality of the Russian infantryman that he literally did not know how to retreat. But where an offensive did actually fail, this incapacity was very serious in circumstances where above all others individual resource and initiative were required. To teach him that he had nothing more to learn, that he was capable of dealing with every problem that could possibly confront him, was all very well so long as he could still advance. But once his formation was broken by superior strength, as the massed artillery of Napoleon afterwards showed, he became a mere unit in a mob, still capable of patient suffering, but difficult to extricate and replace in an orderly array.

We have been provided with a description of the Suvorovian system at work during the Polish War. A number of foreign officers had the opportunity of watching the Russian troops, and in 1796 Major Vronski collected the opinions of some Prussian and Austrian officers, and set them out in a report to the Empress. Vronski himself was not a partisan of Suvorof's, but his report is on the whole very favourable to his system. It declared that he was a very wise, very virtuous, and very noble man, who nevertheless had the weakness

<sup>1</sup> Instructions at Kinburn, in Pyetrof (second War), i. 18. At the battle of the Alma it was noticed that many of the men in the Russian columns fired in the air in the same way as at Kinburn.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

of judging others by his own standards, and was consequently incapable of understanding that they could deceive him, when in fact they most emphatically did deceive him. He was richly endowed with military gifts, but declined to follow the conventional rules of tactics, and tried to open the road to a revolution in military science. After praising the quality of the soldiers, the report points out that they could be beaten in the moment of victory, partly because of their disposition to break their formation, and partly because of their drunkenness. Their successes hitherto had been against enemies who could not take advantage of their weaknesses. They were not trained to retire, and if attacked while in disorder were quickly defeated; even the generals did not know how to withdraw their men. But the Russian patience made their armies hard to beat; and victory could only be won over them by manœuvres which prevented them from getting to close quarters with the bayonet, by feigned retreats which broke up their formations, and by steady and sustained fire, which was especially effective against Cossacks.<sup>1</sup>

This is a very just estimate, and it applies as forcibly to the Russian soldier of later times as to Suworof's own men. The principles of the *Science of Victory* have been the basis of Russian infantry training for more than a century. Careless of appearances, and careful of the essential obedience, patience, and indifference to losses in the field, the Russian infantry have always been ineffective with the rifle, terrible with the bayonet, and as clumsily passive in retreat as they have been vigorous, persistent, and tireless in advance. Under Suworof they became the most formidable in

<sup>1</sup> *State Archives*, vii. 2898; quoted in Pyetrush. ii. x. 292. Sir Robert Wilson, the British officer attached to the Russian armies which served against Napoleon, refers to the Russian incapacity for movements "not in union with Suworof's practice," and adds, "The most difficult of human operations to the year 1807 was the conduct of a Russian retreat." See his *Brief Remarks, etc. on the Russian Army*, 2.

Europe, and though Wellington's Peninsular troops would have beaten them as they beat the French, by superior musketry, there was no other infantry in Europe which they need have feared to meet. Out of this training school at Tultchin came the system, moral rather than tactical, which in 1799 overthrew French armies, and with wiser statesmanship would have overthrown the French Republic. There is no reason to suppose that Napoleon himself, in his Italian period, would have been able to defeat Suvorof. But on the 17th November 1796 Catherine died, and with her vanished the Field-Marshal's opportunity of meeting the first soldier of France.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DOWNFALL AND EXILE

Paul I. and Prussianism—Suvorof fails to please—Dismissed—Exiled—Troubles with his wife and his property—His son—Daily life—Recalled—Recalcitrant—Plans for a French War—Meditates a monastery—Recalled again, 1799—War at last.

WHATEVER faults there may have been in Suvorof's military method, there can be no doubt that it was better than that which paralysed the army after the accession of the Emperor Paul. Even before he became Emperor, Paul had been passionately devoted to military exercises, and, unfortunately, the Prussian blight had fallen upon him more completely than upon any other person of equal importance in Europe. His character was extremely complex, and he passed from one mood to another with bewildering and dangerous facility. He was often magnanimous, and one of his first public acts as Emperor was to pardon and release Kosciusko and the other leaders of the Polish insurrection. But he was equally capable of severity, and a personal interview with him was as likely to end in exile to Siberia as in promotion in the State service. This instability of temper made his interest in the affairs of the army extremely unpleasant for officers and men alike. Before he ascended the throne, he had made a tour of Europe, and became a fanatical admirer of Frederick the Great. Upon him he modelled his life, and especially his military life. At his country seat at Gatchina he collected and trained a miniature

army of his own. The ideas which he first carried out on this small scale were expanded after his accession, so as to include the whole of the Imperial forces. Detail in all things was his passion, and nowhere had he greater scope for expressing his ardour for it than in the clothing and drilling of soldiers. In the army, therefore, the spirit of Prussianism was carried to the extreme. The uniforms were modelled on those of Frederick's soldiers, the Prussian drill was slavishly imitated, and evolutions, instead of being used as means to success in real warfare, were made ends in themselves. So far as was possible, Paul reduced the army to a machine, and himself supervised the execution of his most insignificant alterations in the littlenesses of dress and drill. From the highest commander below the Emperor down to the most humble private soldier, all military persons were, so far as possible, reduced to mere parts of a lifeless and unintelligent mechanism.

This was one of those fits of Prussian mechanicalness which have from time to time at once regulated and paralysed the wayward individualism of Russia. Like the other epidemics of efficiency, it had its good as well as its bad side. The Russian military system had sunk, during the reign of Catherine and under the gorgeous negligence of Potyomkin, into the depths of inefficiency and corruption. Suvorof's efforts to improve matters in Finland, Kherson, and Tultchin have already been described, and though he was the most active and successful, he was not the only reformer. But the general condition was lamentable. The Guards were splendid, lazy, and incompetent; the other regiments unkempt and ill-disciplined. Patronage and jobbery in promotions, waste and peculation in the expenditure of regimental funds, absenteeism among the officers, the appropriation of large numbers of private soldiers to service as couriers, orderlies, or personal servants, savage punishments producing wholesale desertions, and a general want of thoroughness, method, and uniformity

in drill, had reduced the bulk of the army to complete uselessness. The wars against the Turks and the Poles necessarily produced a better state of affairs among the troops who actually took part in them. But in spite of the constant warfare many officers and men had no experience of active service, and the Guards, in particular did not make a single campaign between 1742 and 1790. At the death of Catherine the army as a whole was incapable of meeting that of any other of the European Powers.

Upon this mass of slovenliness, dishonesty, and neglect, the reforming zeal of the Emperor fell with religious fury, and if he flew into extravagances in detail he undoubtedly produced an improvement in the general temper of the troops. The officers from Gatchina, where they had been engaged in training his model army during the last years of Catherine's reign, followed Paul to Petersburg, and their uniforms, their drill, and their theories were enforced upon the Guards and the other regiments of the old sort with all the energy and terrifying capriciousness of the new Sovereign. The new uniforms, the long-skirted coats, the tight trousers, the lacquered boots, the gaiters and garters and hooks and eyes, the powdered heads and beribboned pigtails were anything but an improvement upon the vest, long coat, loose trousers, and soft boots of the time of Catherine. The soldier who had to polish up his boots after a march over a Russian road in autumn, or sit up all night to keep his freshly powdered hair in order for the morning's inspection, was none the better soldier for the experience. Nor were the officers improved by compulsory attendance at lectures, after which they might be examined by the Emperor in person, or by seeing him get up early in the morning to dress the ranks for them before drill began.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless,

<sup>1</sup> One day the Petersburg garrison read a general order to the effect that " *the deceased general N. N. is severely admonished for his ignorance of his duty* " ("Reminiscences of A. M. Turgyeneyef," *Russkaya Starina* (1886), ii. 40).



the system, pettifogging though it was, got some sort of method into the army. It would have succeeded more than it did but for the uncertain temper of the man who enforced it. Paul was on the throne for four years and four months, and in that time the number of officers who were placed on the retired list or expelled from the service with ignominy included 7 Field-M Marshals, more than 300 Generals, and more than 2000 Staff Officers and other officers of senior rank. There was no certainty of tenure, and in consequence no responsibility. Slovenliness, if detected, was sure of punishment, but there was no real safety in industry and intelligence. Obviously such methods produced innumerable evasions and occasional conformities, and in many cases an appearance of efficiency must have been worked up to cover actual negligence and incompetence. On the other hand, the most honest officer was never sure of his place, and one error or omission of the most trifling kind might end in dismissal or even exile to Siberia. The moral improvement of the army was by no means proportioned to the formal improvement. Nevertheless the army of Paul was better than the army of Catherine.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, Suvorof was pursuing his own course at Tultchin, and enough has already been said of his methods to show how little he was likely to conform to the new requirements. Nevertheless, for a brief space, the relations between the new Sovereign and the bizarre Field-Marshal remained friendly, though the latter, as a client of the detested dilettante Potyomkin, must have been suspect from the first. The distance between Tultchin and Petersburg postponed a rupture with Suvorof, while Paul busied himself with the short-

<sup>1</sup> I have taken this account from Pyetrushevski's chap. xxii. For details of Paul's character and reforms, see K. Waliszewski, *Le Fils de la Grande Catherine, Paul I<sup>er</sup>*. There is a story of a cavalry colonel who had not enough smart boots for his whole regiment. He therefore issued one boot to each man, ordering him to put it on the leg which the Emperor would see at the march past!

comings of Generals nearer home. But the shower of rewards and honours passed by him, and on the 26th December he committed his first offence against the new system by sending an adjutant to Petersburg with private letters. The officer was promptly sent to serve in another regiment, and Suvorof was informed that this use of officers as private couriers was degrading to the service and their rank. Before this rebuke reached him, he sinned three times in rapid succession. He altered the distribution of some of the units in his command, he asked that the Cossack General Isayof should be left on his staff when he was ordered to send all his Cossacks back to their own province, and he granted leave to Lieutenant-Colonel Baturin at a time when the Emperor was particularly incensed against the granting of leave to officers. Baturin was promptly sent back from Petersburg with a severe rebuke for Suvorof. But before he returned another officer on leave appeared in the capital, and this unfortunate holiday-maker was sent to Riga. These offences against the regulations were publicly denounced in the Imperial Orders to the army. Another admonition was despatched to Suvorof himself, but by this time the latter had received the first of the series, and had written to the Emperor asking leave to retire from the service. The answer to this was a summons to Petersburg.

Actual contact between the two quick-tempered men was bound to produce an explosion. The Emperor's fury at the informal proceedings of Suvorof was matched by Suvorof's impatience at the pettifogging regulations of the Emperor. His correspondence with Khvostof contains more than one characteristic outburst. In December 1796 he was complaining that the Russian national army was being turned into a Prussian mercenary army, and, after the Emperor's refusal to go on with the war with France, he declared that "the Carmagnolists will beat the Germans, and then the

Russians will be bored into being beaten like the Germans." And on the 3rd January 1797 he wrote:

. . . the soldiers are indescribably unhappy, depressed and demoralised by boredom. My pace has been reduced to three quarters, and consequently against the enemy, instead of 40 versts, it's only 30. I'm a husbandman at Kobrin, only just better than an inspector, which I was when I was a Lieutenant-Colonel. . . . I'm dying from day to day.

Then he sketched out the plot of a drama, with himself as the ostracised Aristides, said that it was a good opportunity for him to retire, and went on to denounce the new Prussian uniforms and drill.

There's nothing more lousy than the Prussians; they call their overcoats "lousers"; you can't go into their sentry boxes or guard houses without getting vermin, and the stink of their heads makes you faint. We used to be free from vermin—the first irritation of the soldiers was gaiters—septic feet. . . . Kindness conceals strictness; you must mix kindness with strictness; otherwise strictness is tyranny. I'm strict in maintaining health, the true art of benevolence; kind soldierly strictness; and from that general brotherliness. And in me capricious strictness would have been tyranny. Civil virtue doesn't make up for useless cruelty to the troops."<sup>1</sup>

The effect of the summons to Petersburg was to determine him to resign from the service. The Emperor, on his part, was incensed, not only by Suvorof's indifference to the new rules of discipline, but also by some of the gibes and sneers which were rightly or wrongly attributed to the recalcitrant Field-Marshal. "Pig-tails don't pierce, buckles don't fire, hair powder doesn't explode." And "Hair powder isn't gunpowder, buckles aren't guns, pigtails aren't salvos, and I'm not a German but a true-born Russian." On reaching Petersburg

<sup>1</sup> These passages are contained in a letter written on the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th January 1797, and entitled, "A Gale of Thoughts." It is in the Petrograd Sbornik.

on the 3rd February, Suworof asked leave to retire. The answer was an Imperial Order: "Field-Marshal Count Suworof having informed his Imperial Highness that as there is no war he has no work to do, for this declaration is dismissed the service." On the 6th February, the date when the Order came into effect, Suworof's career seemed at an end. He was in his sixty-seventh year, and he prepared to withdraw to his new estate at Kobrin, and there live like a simple country gentleman.

Arranging affairs at Tultchin, he went to Kobrin, and began to set the estate in order. He found it in the occupation of 8187 serfs and their families. He had arranged with 18 of his old officers, including his biographer, Anting, and his staff surgeon, Byelopolski, to join him on the estate, and had promised each of them a certain number of serfs, in return for the services which he would require of them. They were, in fact, to be estate agents for different sections of the property, with Lieutenant-Colonel Koritskii at their head. But the whole project was overthrown like a house of cards by an Imperial Order. On the 3rd May an Assessor of the Military College, named Nikolyef, appeared at Kobrin, with instructions to remove Suworof. Nikolyef expressed his regret, and said he must obey his orders. "I should not," said Suworof; "I'd have said I was unwell."<sup>1</sup> He made no other protest. At 10 o'clock on the morning of the 4th he took his seat in his carriage. But before starting, Koritskii presented him with the formal documents by which he divided more than 1500 of his serfs among Koritskii and his fellows. Without saying a word, Suworof signed the papers and drove off. He went without papers, without his jewellery, and without money, except a thousand roubles which he borrowed from Koritskii. His destination was the little village of Kontchansk, 30 miles from Borovitchi, where his father had left him an estate of 1000 male

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Vjest.* (1884), xviii, 144.

serfs. On the 16th May he arrived at this obscure place, which he could have no hope of ever leaving alive. The district was unfertile, swampy, and full of timber, and the house in which he was to live was in bad repair. What had impelled the Emperor to exile him to this place will probably never be known. The utmost diligence of his Russian biographers has discovered no facts which could have come to the Emperor's knowledge after Suvorof's departure for Kobrin, and it is not necessary, to explain this new degradation, that any such facts should be found. For the acts of a man like Paul reasons were not always required. Meditating on Suvorof, he no doubt recalled something which revived his fury, and he struck a second blow where one would have sufficed.

These new and dull surroundings were not the only discomfort in which Suvorof was involved. On the 31st May Nikolyef descended once more upon Kobrin, arrested all the officers who were settled there, and transported them to Kief. After some delay they were allowed to return. The rapacity with which they secured their shares of the property in the first place was equalled by the extravagance with which they now proceeded to dissipate them, and the estate suffered considerable damage. Valuable timber was wasted, part of the proceeds of sales of corn was embezzled, and money and provisions were squandered in entertaining guests. In November 1797 Suvorof at last came to the conclusion that he must get rid of the officers altogether, and he took steps to buy them out, offering twenty roubles a serf to those who would leave Kobrin altogether, and forty to those who would remain on the estate until his death.<sup>1</sup>

He had also trouble with his wife. Getting into debt, and not satisfied with the allowance which he had agreed to make to her, she applied for a sum of 23,000

<sup>1</sup> There is a mass of correspondence about these matters in the Petrograd Sbornik,

roubles. The Emperor ordered an inquiry to be made, and Suvorof was ordered to pay. The result of this investigation was to show that he was now a rich man. From his father he had inherited 2080 "souls," and Imperial grants had given him 7000 more. His income amounted to 50,000 roubles. Besides his estates in the country, he had a stone house in Moscow worth 12,000 roubles, and the jewels which Catherine had given to him were worth 100,000. His debts amounted only to 17,200 roubles. But he had given away or promised two dowries, one of 60,000 and the other of 30,000 roubles.<sup>1</sup> The military trade has seldom been more profitable. But it should be noted that the gains were entirely due to gifts from the Throne, and there was no suggestion, in the investigator's report, that Suvorof had obtained anything by either plunder or speculation. As much could not be said of very many of his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors in the Russian service.

During this period his son attracted the affection which he could no longer show towards his wife. Young Arkadii was now fourteen years old, and his father grew disturbed about his education. The boy had been living in his sister's house, with one Sion as his tutor. The latter was already suspected by Suvorof of extravagance and fast living, and when the Zubofs went to Moscow at the end of 1797, the Field-Marshal wrote to the faithful Khvostof to remove him from Sion's care altogether. The tutor had taken Arkadii to his own lodging, and was apparently going to bring him

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Vvest.* (1884), xviii. 144, 158. Pyetrushevski has examined a large mass of documents relating to his estates, and comes to the conclusion that he was a good landowner, not inflicting savage punishments on his serfs, purchasing substitutes for those liable to military service, encouraging marriage and large families, and, as might be expected, blaming parents for a high infant death-rate. But he had no scruples about migrating serfs from one estate to another, bringing girls away to be married, and generally asserting himself as the benevolent despot he was.

up as a young man of fashion. Suvorof accordingly asked Khvostof to take charge of his son.

Arkadii needs spotless morals, not visits and return visits; not intercourse with young bloods, where they suffer shipwreck . . . you have a corner, his acquaintance will be Andy and Basil, and so until he's eighteen, and then we'll look round. You'll be his Aristotle; Natasha was brought up by you, he's her heir.<sup>1</sup>

A new tutor was found in the person of Ivan Dyementyevitch Kanitsyef, chosen "not for his learning, but for his morality."<sup>2</sup> Kanitsyef was to receive 300 roubles a year for his life.<sup>3</sup>

To the boy himself Suvorof wrote for the most part brief exhortations of this sort:

Be well-behaved, follow my rules, be obedient to Dimitri Ivanovitch [Khvostof], use your spare time for your own enlightenment in well-doing; the Lord God be with you.

And again:

To Arkadii honour, morality, courage; aversion from equivocation, enigmas, phrases; moderation, endurance, constancy."<sup>4</sup>

Suvorof lived to see the promise of his son, but not his performance. Arkadii was with him during the greater part of his last campaign, and afterwards served in the Turkish War under Kutuzof. He was a gallant lad, as much loved by his men as his father had been. But unhappily he was a gambler and a spendthrift, and he had already dissipated much of his inheritance when he died. His coachman fell into that Ruimnik by whose waters his father had gained his most brilliant victory. Plunging in after his servant, the young man injured his arm, was unable to reach the shore, and perished. His father would have been proud of his death if not of his life.

<sup>1</sup> Pyetrush. (2nd ed.), 499.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 500.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Apart from his financial distresses, which in the end did not cost him more than he could pay without hardship, Suworof's life at Kontchansk was of the simplest kind. Local tradition has preserved some of its details, his own letters furnish others, and yet more are to be found in Nikolyef's reports. According to Nikolyef his manner of life had not changed very much, and he was still, as always, on active service. He rose two hours before dawn, drank some tea, and washed himself. At dawn he went to church, and took part in matins and the mass, himself reading part of the service and singing. At 7 o'clock he lunched. Then he slept. When he got up he washed again, looked in at the evening service, and after that washed himself three times and went to bed. He never ate meat. He spent the whole day alone, never received visitors, and talked only with his own servants and a few soldiers who remained about the place. His ordinary clothes were of the simplest. On Sundays and holidays he put on a Jäger tunic and helmet; on the most solemn festivals, his Field-Marshal's uniform with all his Orders. As a rule he went about in shirt and breeches. On one foot he wore a boot, and on the other a slipper.<sup>1</sup>

The people of the village noticed other things. In hot weather he took off his shirt, and walked about the fields naked to the waist, with the faithful but drunken Proshka at his heels. The people noticed that the Field-Marshal's skin was sunburnt, and not at all like that of an ordinary fine gentleman. On these occasions he carried a black knotted stick. His conduct in church was sometimes unusual. He crossed himself with great fervour and very rapidly, striking himself with three fingers on the forehead, the breast, and right and left shoulders. During the service he bowed his head constantly to the ground, striking it with his forehead, but without bending his knees. Sometimes he looked between his legs at the worshippers behind him, and if

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Vycst.* (1884), 155.



he saw anybody smiling, he told them after the service that they should look at the images of the Saviour and St. Nicholas, and not at their master.<sup>1</sup>

In his own letters we get references to occasional visits from friends, dinners with the village priest, and firing salutes and feasting the villagers on Imperial birthdays.<sup>2</sup> From other sources we learn of strolls about his garden, superintending the building of out-houses and potting-sheds, and walks to the top of Oak Hill, half a mile away from his house, whence he could look out over the woods and waters of the district. He was often in the houses of the peasantry, arranging betrothals, attending weddings, fondling babies, and playing with the children. For the winter he built himself a "bird room," a large apartment fitted with trees and plants and full of little birds, where he sat and sometimes had his meals. His reading was no doubt as constant and as miscellaneous as ever, and he kept in touch with the affairs of Europe through the newspapers.<sup>3</sup>

This quiet life was not congenial now any more than in previous years, and on the 22nd January 1798 Nikolyef had to report that

The Count grows every day more irritable, and hardly a day passes without his striking one of his people. Even on Christmas Day itself, after morning service, in the presence of all his servants, he gave somebody a cuff. He was angry with me because I accidentally called him "you" instead of "Your Excellency."<sup>4</sup>

So early as the 1st October 1797 Suvorof had written to the Emperor :

Repent ; have pity on a poor old man. Forgive, if he has done wrong in anything.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Istoritch. Vyes.* (1886), xxvi. 408.

<sup>2</sup> *Materials of Milyutin*, quoted in Pyetrush. ii. 406, 407.

<sup>3</sup> *Russ. Vyes.* (1884), xviii. 144.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 158.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 156.

Other letters followed, to the Emperor and the Empress, and Khvostof was called upon to present them and do his best to get his uncle recalled.<sup>1</sup>

At last the Emperor resolved to end the exile of the great soldier, and on the 25th February sent his nephew, Prince Andryei Gortchakof, to summon him to Petersburg. But the old man was in a testy mood, and for a long time demurred. He was old and unwell. He had had seven attacks of paralysis, seventy of gout, and seven hundred of fever, and he didn't want to come. Gortchakof, fearing the Emperor more than his uncle, finally succeeded in persuading him. But Suworof would only come with ordinary post-horses and was not going to hurry. Glad to get him on any terms, Gortchakof drove back with all speed to Petersburg, and found the Emperor impatiently waiting. Informed that the Count would come, he ordered that he should be told when he arrived, "whatever the hour." Suworof drove up at ten o'clock at night, when the Emperor was already undressed. Gortchakof duly made his report to the Emperor, who came out of his bedroom wrapped in a greatcoat. "I shall receive the Count at 9 in the morning." "Very good, Sire. And in what uniform?" "In the ordinary uniform of the army."

Clad in one of his nephew's uniforms, in the new Prussian style, without any badges of rank, Suworof presented himself the next day at the Winter Palace. While waiting in the ante-room he amused himself by jesting with the other officers present, and was specially pleased with talking Turkish to Count Kutaizof, a baptized Turk, whom Paul had raised from among his valets to the ranks of the nobility. At a quarter past nine the Emperor arrived, and a private interview of an hour's length took place. From this the two emerged, the Emperor worried, and Suworof obviously in a difficult mood. Paul then invited him to be present

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1892), lxxiv. 574.

at the morning's inspection of troops. This was intended as a special compliment. But the old warrior refused to be conciliated. The new Prussian uniforms and drill were too much for him. He sneered at the evolutions, shuffled about, and constantly said to Gortchakof, "No, I can't stand any more; I'm going." Gortchakof urged him to stay; it would be a breach of etiquette to go. But at last Suvorof's patience was quite exhausted. "I can't stand any more; I've got a belly-ache." And off he went.

After the inspection Paul demanded of the unfortunate Gortchakof what all this meant? The latter plunged into such excuses as he could invent, but Paul cut him short, with obvious anger. "I speak to him of the services which he can still render to his country and to me; I bring the conversation to the point where he may ask himself for work—and instead of that he turns off to Izmail, and begins a long description of the storm. I listen to his endless tale, and then again bring him back to the point—and instead of that, there we are, trotted away to Praga or Otchakof." Then he turned to the incident of the inspection. "Please, my good sir, go to him, ask him himself to explain his conduct, and bring his answer back to me as soon as possible. I shall not sit down to dinner till you come."

Gortchakof, between his all-powerful Emperor and his disrespectful old uncle, was in a most unenviable position. He found Suvorof immovable. "I was an inspector when I was a Major-General; it's too late now to make me an inspector again. Let them make me Commander-in-Chief, and give me my old staff, and give me a free hand, so that I can promote people, and not go on asking. . . . Then, if you like, I'll come back to the service. If not, better go back to the village; I'm old and feeble; I want to be a monk. . . ." "But I can't tell that to the Emperor!" "Tell him what you like. I can't change myself." From the deep sea Gortchakof returned in great perturbation

to the devil. He reported that his uncle had been overpowered by the presence of his Imperial Highness ; did not accurately remember what he had said ; very much regretted his stupidity ; would speak differently another time ; and would gladly profit by the Imperial kindness if the Emperor would take him back into the service. " Very well," said the Emperor, " I authorise you to take charge of your uncle. You will be responsible for him."

Gortchakof's new post of Suvorof-keeper proved beyond all others formidable. The Emperor several times invited the stubborn old man to dinner, and talked of his future services. Suvorof was as deferential as ever, and actual violence was sometimes required to prevent him from prostrating himself before the Emperor and Grand Dukes.<sup>1</sup> But he remained obdurate, took refuge in his illness and feebleness, and never stopped playing pranks, and gibing at the new uniforms and equipment. Once he spent a quarter of an hour gravely and conscientiously trying to get into his carriage, to show the impossibility of getting about with a great long sword sticking out behind him. At an inspection he pretended that he could not manage his flat hat, and after beating it several times on the ground, first with one hand and then with the other, he ended by dropping it at the foot of the frowning Emperor himself. Then he deliberately ran about and bustled into the way of a formal march past, and spoilt the whole performance, showing the while by his expression his amazement and wonder what all this tomfoolery meant. Not content with this, he kept muttering through his nose and crossing himself, and when the Tsar asked him what he meant by it, he replied that he was only repeating the prayer, " Thy will be done."

<sup>1</sup> *Istor. Vjest.* (1900), lxxx. 527, " Anecdotes of Theodor G. Golovkin." The same observer declares that the Empress once ordered a dish of fruit to be offered to him. He thanked her profusely, and ordered the whole dish to be taken to his room !

After every occasion of this sort, Paul demanded an explanation from the luckless Gortchakof. The latter suggested an excuse, went to Suvorof, received his expressions of impenitence and contumacy, and went back to the Emperor with yet another plausible invention. At length, after three weeks, Paul abandoned his attempts to get Suvorof back into harness, and dismissed him.<sup>1</sup> The old man delivered himself of some defiant cockerows and went back to Kontchansk.<sup>2</sup>

The Emperor had not given up all belief in Suvorof, or ceased to hope for his advice. In September 1798 he sent Major-General Prevost de Lumian, who had served with the old man in Finland, to ask his opinion about the threatened war with the French Republic. Suvorof dictated the following :

Austrians and Prussians will act against France with 100,000 men each, as follows :

1. Nothing but the offensive.
2. Speed on the march, energy in attacks, cold steel.
3. Never any "methodics"—good apprehension.
4. Full power to the Commander-in-Chief.
5. Fall upon the enemy and beat him in the field.
6. Lose no time in sieges, unless some fortress base like Mainz comes in the way. Sometimes blockade with an observation corps, sometimes take a fortress by assault or storm. Then you lose less.
7. Never break strength to protect different points. If the enemy passes these points, so much the better ; he is all the nearer for being beaten.
8. . . . Go forward fighting, without stopping, and straight to Paris, as the chief objective, not stopping at Landau except only to secure the rear, not for a retreat, of which it is never necessary to think, but for the baggage trains ; and never encumber yourselves with empty manœuvres, counter-marches or so-called "*ruses de guerre*," which please only wretched academicals.
9. . . . No delays, false prudence and jealousy, heads of Medea [sic] in the Cabinet and the Ministry.

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Vyest.* (1856), vi.

<sup>2</sup> *Russ. Star.* lxxiv. 575.

A young Marlborough will come to light—and not a few Suvorofs and Coburgs.<sup>1</sup>

For the moment nothing came of the plan, and it remained as a hint of what Suvorof would do if he were given the chief command against the French. But even if war were declared it seemed very unlikely that he would ever serve again. He was now sixty-eight years old. His active career had apparently come to an end, his health was not good, and his solitary life gave him inactivity without repose. He made up his mind that he had better end his days in a monastery. In December 1798 he wrote to the Emperor :

I most humbly request your Imperial Highness to allow me to retire to the Novogorod Hermitage at Nilof, where I am resolved to end my brief days in the service of God. Our Saviour alone is without sin. Forgive my abruptness, Gracious Sovereign.

And he signed himself “ the most humble suppliant and slave of God.”

This appeal received no direct answer. But on the 6th February of the next year came an Imperial rescript which must have resounded in the exile's ears like a clap of thunder.

This day I have received, Count Alexander Vassilyevitch, news of the pressing desire of the Court of Vienna, that you should lead its armies in Italy, whither will also go my corps of Rosenberg and Herman. So therefore and in the present state of Europe, I think it my duty to propose to you to take the matter and command upon yourself and to come here for your journey to Vienna.

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, *History of the War of 1799*, ii. 1, 6. Fuchs was Suvorof's secretary during his last campaign, but a pretentious and careless historian. His *History* includes two volumes of copies of letters, general orders, and other documents, not always accurate, as a comparison with other authorities shows.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN, FIRST STAGE

The French Revolutionary Armies—Suvorof's method compared—Paul and Suvorof—Suvorof leaves for Vienna—People and Ministers—Arrival at Verona—Instructing the Austrians—The march to the Adda—Crossing the Adda—Entrance into Milan—Wrestling with the High War Council at Vienna—Entrance into Turin—More difficulties—Suvorof wants to go home—Operations in Switzerland—The French cross the Apennines—The march to the Tidone—Battle of the Trebbia—Return to Alessandria.

THE French Revolutionary armies, at first not much better than armed mobs, had by this time worked out a system of warfare which made them the terror of Western Europe. Moving habitually by forced marches, careless about lines of communication, and living upon the country as they went, they were too quick for the methodical armies of Austria. In the field they scorned the flanking movements and carefully prepared defensive positions of the enemy, and their attacks in column broke through the opposing lines in spite of all that individual bravery could do to stop them. Their tactics alone would not have given them victory. The English in the Peninsula always used a line formation and beat them. The real secret of success of the French was their temper. Both leaders and men were full of a spirit which made them indifferent to hardships while moving towards the field of battle, and indifferent to dangers when they were upon it. The rapidity of their marches and the violence of their blows against the enemy were inspired by the

same fanatical spirit, whether that was a passion for liberty or a mere craving for military glory or for plunder. This spirit could only be conquered by another spirit, and in the end the spirit of nationalism overcame that of revolution. But long before their final overthrow, Suvorof had already shown Europe the secret of success, had Europe but known how to use it. The Austrian Court took care that he should not arouse national feeling against the French. But he could use his personal influence over his troops, and with this he impelled them to prodigies of valour as astonishing as those of the French themselves. His marches were as rapid, and his men fought with the same indifference to loss. To the political fanaticism of the French armies he opposed the personal fanaticism of his own, and overthrew a cause by a character. His system was as unsystematic as that of the French. It had as little to do with paper combinations, plans of campaign, and theories. It consisted primarily in the mutual devotion of leader and men, in their belief that together they could go anywhere and do anything, and in the second place, in the physical training which kept individual officers and men at the highest pitch of bodily efficiency. It had its limitations, and in the end, when Suvorof encountered a head younger and cooler than his own, he found that there were things which could not be done. But for a time his trust in *moral* as the decisive thing in war was justified by an amazing series of victories. To this strenuous task he was now recalled by the Emperor.

In May 1798, after his sensational triumphs over the Austrian forces in Italy, Napoleon had sailed for Egypt. On his way he seized Malta, then the property of the Knights of St. John. The Emperor Paul, in one of his theatrical moods, had allowed himself in the previous year to be styled Patron and Grand Master of the Order, which appeared to him a strong bulwark against democratic principles. Taking the annexation



of the island as an affront to his own majesty, he despatched three armies to the assistance of Austria, who, with Great Britain, Turkey, and Naples, now formed the Second Coalition against the French. The first army, under Rosenberg, was 22,000 strong; the second, under Herman, 11,000; and the third, under Numsen, 36,000. Originally they were intended to operate against the French in North Italy, Naples, and South Germany respectively. But early in 1799 Herman's army was ordered to reinforce Rosenberg's in North Italy, and Numsen's, in co-operation with the Austrians and the French *émigrés* under the Prince of Condé, to act on the Upper Rhine against the French army of Masséna in Switzerland. The Archduke Charles of Austria was the obvious choice for the high command on the Rhine. The Austrians threatening the eastern frontier of Switzerland were under Count Bellegarde. But the Archduke Joseph was too young for the Italian command, and to some genius in Vienna or London it occurred to ask that Suvorof should be sent as his adviser, and in effect, as the commander-in-chief of the combined armies in Northern Italy.<sup>1</sup>

Paul was naturally flattered, and consented. But while this tribute from abroad forced him to recognise Suvorof's merit, he neither understood nor trusted him. He even wrote to Herman, an officer after his own heart, instructing him to play the mentor to Suvorof, who was liable to be carried away by his imagination, moderate his outbreaks, and see that he did no damage to the troops.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately for himself and the army, Herman never went to Italy, and the command of his force was in the end given to Rehbinder. The post of tutor was not filled up, and so far as Paul was concerned, Suvorof had the utmost possible freedom. The

<sup>1</sup> As long before as 1793 the Austrian General Würmser said to Grimm: "Give us your Count Suvorof and 15,000 Russians, and I promise you that in a fortnight we'll be in Mainz and have bagged all the arms and stuff in the place" (*Voronts. Arkh.* xx. 332).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xii. 217.

Tsar even sent his son, the Grand Duke Constantine, to learn the military trade under him in Italy. The hero came in due course to Petersburg. On this occasion his pranks were less serious than before. He was invested by the Emperor with the Maltese Cross. He fell upon his knees and cried, "Lord, save the Emperor!" "Do you," answered Paul, "go and save the Emperors." Then some of those present stepped forward to raise the old man. He leaped up, and spun round on one leg. "Voilà!" he exclaimed, "I stood up by myself!"<sup>1</sup> He was of course surrounded by old friends and new flatterers. At one of his receptions Nikolyef had the boldness to appear. Suvorof greeted him with enthusiasm. "Merciful God! My chief benefactor! Proshka, set him above all the others!" Thereupon the servant placed a stool on the couch, and Suvorof compelled the unfortunate official to get up, and treated him to a series of profound obeisances.<sup>2</sup>

He left for Vienna in the middle of February 1799. Rosenberg's army was already on its way, but the other two were still in process of formation. He moved for once by easy stages, and stayed for some days at Mittau, where he paid a formal visit to the exiled Louis of France. Nothing of importance passed at this interview. But the local gentry were given a taste of the old Suvorof at his own reception. As they gathered in the saloon, the door of his bedroom was suddenly opened. The hero appeared in his shirt, announced briefly, "Suvorof is coming out," and withdrew. A minute later he emerged, wearing full uniform and all his decorations, and solemnly received the guests. Thus he announced that the conqueror of the French would be no polished and refined penitent, but the same recalcitrant old porcupine who had erected his bristles against social and military pedants in the palaces of Petersburg and on the battlefields of

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1872), 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 93, 94.

Turkey and Poland.<sup>1</sup> His journey beyond Mittau continued to be laborious and slow. A regiment of cuirassiers overtook his carriage near Kobrin, stuck in a snowdrift. They dug it out, the old man hallooing at them from the window, "Hurra, hurra! Gallant Carabineers of the Ruimnik!"<sup>2</sup> Soon after this he abandoned the carriage altogether, and continued his way in a post sledge. On the 25th March he reached Vienna.

There he was greeted with enthusiasm by the ordinary people, with affability by the Emperor, with a mixture of admiration, curiosity, and superciliousness by the military, and with professional concealment of his real feelings by Thugut, the all-powerful Minister. On the whole, with his old friends Coburg and De Ligne to sponsor him, he made a good impression, though his behaviour at receptions, skipping like a goat from one group to another, and overwhelming the great ladies by the profundity of his bows and the lavishness of his flatteries, excited no little amusement.<sup>3</sup> The general mass of the inhabitants wished him nothing but good, and the crowds in the streets welcomed him without reserve.<sup>4</sup> But the authorities were by no means disposed to give him their full confidence. The greatness which seizes the affection of the populace is the very quality which arouses the suspicions of a bureaucracy. Where the people acclaim a leader, officials scent only an undisciplined servant. The Emperor and his advisers were ready enough to make use of Suvorof. They made him a Field-Marshal in the Austrian Army, decided not to encumber him with the Archduke Joseph, and

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1873), vii. 263.

<sup>2</sup> Loewenstern, *Memoirs*, i. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Vassiltchkof, *Syemyestvo Razumovskikh*, iii.

<sup>4</sup> One eye-witness, Ribeaupierre, asserts that as he drove through the streets, in response to the cheers for "Paul and Suvorof," he shouted, "Vivat Josef!" On being reminded that the reigning Emperor's name was Franz, he exclaimed, "Merciful God! I forgot! Vivat Franz!" (*Russ. Arkh.* (1877), i. 471).

appointed the veteran Melas to take command, under him, of the Austrian Army in Italy. They provided Suvorof himself with an efficient staff, headed by the Marquis von Chasteler, and made up the other great Russian deficiency by undertaking all the commissariat of his army. This was only to make him a better instrument. Whatever his qualities as a leader in the field, they had no intention of giving him a free hand, even in the elaboration of a plan of campaign. Four members of the High War Council waited upon him with a plan of campaign "as far as the river Adda"; and a request that he should express his opinion upon it. He drew a great cross over the sheet, and wrote at the bottom: "The plan will begin with the passage of the Adda, and will end as God pleases." This was an ominous beginning. The Austrian Ministers imposed restrictions on the liberty of their own Archduke. They were not going to give freedom of action to an eccentric foreigner, who had been successful against barbarians and insurgents, but had had no experience of disciplined enemies. Modesty should have reminded them that they had themselves been defeated by the same barbarians, and gratitude that they had got great profits by his victories over the insurgents; while his very presence among them was a comment on the fact that against their disciplined enemies they had shown nothing better than a resolute incompetence. But the pride of a Hapsburg Ministry admits of neither criticism of self nor a generous estimate of others. When Suvorof left Vienna on the 4th April, he took with him the express orders of the Emperor himself that the whole object of his campaign should be to protect the possessions of Austria, and remove from them all danger of a hostile invasion. Until the attitude of the Elector of Bavaria was known, and until all the French strong places in North Italy were reduced, there could be no thought of a concerted offensive against the French in Switzerland or elsewhere. Suvorof was thus tied down to a limited

scheme. It is certain that these orders produced no change in his mind. His own intention remained what it had always been : to meet the enemy wherever they were to be found, beat them, and follow them, if necessary, even into their own territory.

Before Suvorof arrived upon the scene, the armies had been already engaged. In spite of their superiority in numbers and the heavy losses which they inflicted upon the enemy, the Austrians under General Kray had behaved with little energy, and had taken up a position under the walls of Verona itself. Nevertheless, the French were not strong enough to press their advantages, and themselves withdrew beyond the Mincio. On the 12th April, leaving garrisons in Peschiera and Mantua, they were in full march towards the Adda. On the 14th Melas, five days after his arrival at Verona, started in pursuit, and on the same day Suvorof entered the town and took up his quarters in the Palazzo Emilio. His reception was even more enthusiastic than at Vienna. For some miles he was accompanied by a cheering crowd, and the people took out the horses and dragged the carriage through the streets with waving flags and shouts of joy.

It was already evening. He ran quickly through his apartments, noting with satisfaction that the mirrors were all covered, and returned to the reception room. Here were gathered the Grand Duke Constantine, Austrian and Russian officers, and representatives of the clergy, the nobility, and the citizens of the town. Going straight to the Archbishop he received his blessing, and then listened to the address of welcome from the town of Verona. He replied that he was sent to expel the shameless French, to restore order, and to defend Thrones and the Christian Faith. He begged the Archbishop to pray God for the Emperors and their pious soldiery, and reminded the nobility and citizens of their duty to be zealous for lawful government. Then he abruptly left the room, and the Italians

dispersed. He returned with his usual rapidity to the remaining officers, wrinkled up his eyes, and asked Rosenberg to present the Generals to him. He stood with his eyes shut. As each unknown name was pronounced, he bowed, saying, "Merciful God! I've not heard it. Let us know each other." But whenever some old acquaintance came forward, he opened his eyes and talked cheerfully of their old campaigns.

When the presentations were finished, he began to walk briskly about the room. Then he stopped, and again wrinkling up his eyes, delivered a series of extracts from the *Science of Victory*: "Discipline! Practice! The military step's a yard; in deploying one and a half. The head doesn't wait for the tail; suddenly, like snow on the head! . . . Bullet's a fool, bayonet's a lad! . . . We've come to beat the godless, windy, feather-headed Frenchies: they fight in columns, and we'll beat them with columns!" Then after a silence of a few minutes he turned swiftly upon Rosenberg, and said: "Your Excellency! Please let me have two regiments of infantry and two of Cossacks." This was not explicit enough for Rosenberg, who answered suavely that it was as his Excellency liked, and which did he require? The Field-Marshal was displeased. He wanted the men to start at once after the enemy, and here was a "can't teller" in the person of his chief subordinate. There followed one or two more Suvorovian questions and one or two more unready replies. Suvorof turned away, walked several times up and down the room, and then, wrinkling his brow, vociferated: "Hinter, guesser, liar, spellbinder, soft-soaper, glib-tongue, can't teller!" After this reply, as annihilating as any of those recorded of Mr. F.'s Aunt, he bowed and left the room, leaving the unhappy Rosenberg to his feelings.<sup>1</sup>

The next day he rode among the troops in his usual familiar style. Coming back to his palace, he again put the question to Rosenberg. The latter was no more

<sup>1</sup> Starkof, on Bagration's authority.

fortunate than before. But on this occasion Bagration came to his rescue, and said that his own regiment was ready. "Ah, you understand me, Prince Peter!" cried Suvorof, "you understand. Get them ready and yourself too!" In less than an hour they reported that the cavalry and infantry were waiting. "God be with you, Prince Peter," said Suvorof, "understand; the head doesn't wait for the tail; suddenly, like snow on the head." Bagration put his men in motion, and they marched down the road to Valleggio, singing their marching songs, and welcomed everywhere with immense enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup> On the same day Suvorof left for the headquarters at Valleggio.

Along the Mincio, the French had the shortest defensive line in Lombardy, protected on each flank by a strong fortress, and, in addition, on the north by Lago di Garda, and on the south by the marches of Mantua and the river Po. After the sanguinary battles around Verona, Scherer had now less than 33,000 men, of whom 7500 were left in Peschiera and Mantua. Against him were about 55,000 Austrian and Russian troops. Vukassovitch, with 7000 Austrians, was descending by Lake Idro in his left rear. On his right was Klenau with 14,500 Austrians. Parties of horse were rousing all the Italians beyond the Po, and the garrison of Ferrara was already shut up in the citadel. Melas, with 29,000 Austrians, was moving directly against his left at Valleggio, and behind Melas was the main Russian Army, with Suvorof at its head. Under such circumstances the line of the Mincio could only have been held by a great military genius. Scherer was a man of ordinary capacity and less than ordinary resolution. He abandoned his line of defence, left nearly a quarter of his army to be besieged in the fortresses, and made away with all speed towards Milan.

After him came Suvorof. On the 16th the latter inspected the Austrians at Valleggio. "A good step!"

<sup>1</sup> Starkof, on Bagration's authority.

he said, "victory!" Nevertheless, he thought it wise to wait a few days, while the Austrian infantry were initiated into the mysteries of the Suvorovian bayonet practice. It was not until the 18th that all the Russians were concentrated at Valleggio, to the number of 11,000.<sup>1</sup> On the 19th they started in pursuit, marching in three columns towards Brescia. A force of 5000 under Count Hohenzollern followed another line from Mantua to Cremona, where on the 21st it captured a considerable quantity of abandoned siege guns and ammunition.<sup>2</sup> On the same day the advance guard of the main army attacked Brescia from all sides, and the commandant surrendered with 1264 officers and men and 46 guns. This was a promising beginning. The news so gratified the Emperor Paul that he sent young Arkadii Suvorof to the army of Italy "to be an eye-witness of his father's victories."<sup>3</sup> It was not Suvorof's way to let an unbeaten enemy run away from him, and he pressed on with all speed.

This energy was too much for some of the Austrians. They were not accustomed to spend half the night in marching, and cover 20 miles in a day. Units sometimes lost their way among the lanes and gardens, fell into streams, and reached their quarters for the night long after they were due. After one night-march in the rain, Melas took it upon himself to halt his men, to rest and dry their clothes. Suvorof thereupon sent him the following letter:

Complaints have come to my notice, that the infantry have wet their feet. For that the weather is to blame. The march was made in the service of a mighty Monarch. Women, coxcombs, and laggards crave for good weather. The big chatterer who complains on service will be dismissed from duty as an egoist. In military practice one must plan quickly and carry out without delay, so as to give the enemy no time to collect himself. If any one's ill, he can stay behind. Italy must be freed

<sup>1</sup> Mil. i. 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 273.

<sup>3</sup> Fuchs, ii. 397.



from the yoke of the godless and the French: every honest officer must sacrifice himself for this end. In no army can argle-barglers be tolerated. Apprehension, quickness, energy!—for this time enough.<sup>1</sup>

Coming from the lusty youth of sixty-nine to the senile old veteran of seventy this rebuke is piquant. No more complaints were heard, and it was not long before Suvorof found that he could rely upon the Austrian rank and file as much as upon the Russian. The dispositions after the fall of Brescia were made in expectation of a speedy encounter with the enemy. Kray was left, with 20,000 men and the siege artillery, to garrison Verona and blockade Peschiera and Mantua, and Klenau was sent across the Po to watch the French in Ferrara and Modena. The army in the field was still in three columns. The first, 29,000 strong, contained the Russian troops and the Austrians of Vukassovitch, Ott, and Zopf, and marched towards Bergamo. The second, consisting of the Austrians of Fröhlich and Keim, 13,000 in all, marched upon Treviglio. The third, a small force of 1500 men under General Seckendorf, went by way of Crema, to maintain connection with Hohenzollern, on his way from Cremona to Pizzighetone. The French were on the 22nd behind the Adda; somewhat increased in numbers by the drafts from the Lombard garrisons. Sérurier, with 8000 men, was at Lecco; Gregnet, with 8000, at Cassano; Victor, with 8000, at Lodi; and Laboissière, with 4000, at Pizzighetone. A small rear-guard offered some resistance on the 23rd at Palazzola on the Oglio, but this was soon brushed aside. On the 24th Denisof's Cossacks galloped into the streets of Bergamo, and captured the citadel and 130 men with 19 guns.<sup>2</sup> On the 25th Seckendorf entered Crema and captured 30 cannon and some stores, and on the same day the two main armies came face to face with each other across the Adda, and prepared for battle.

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, ii. ; Mil. i. 279.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. 282.

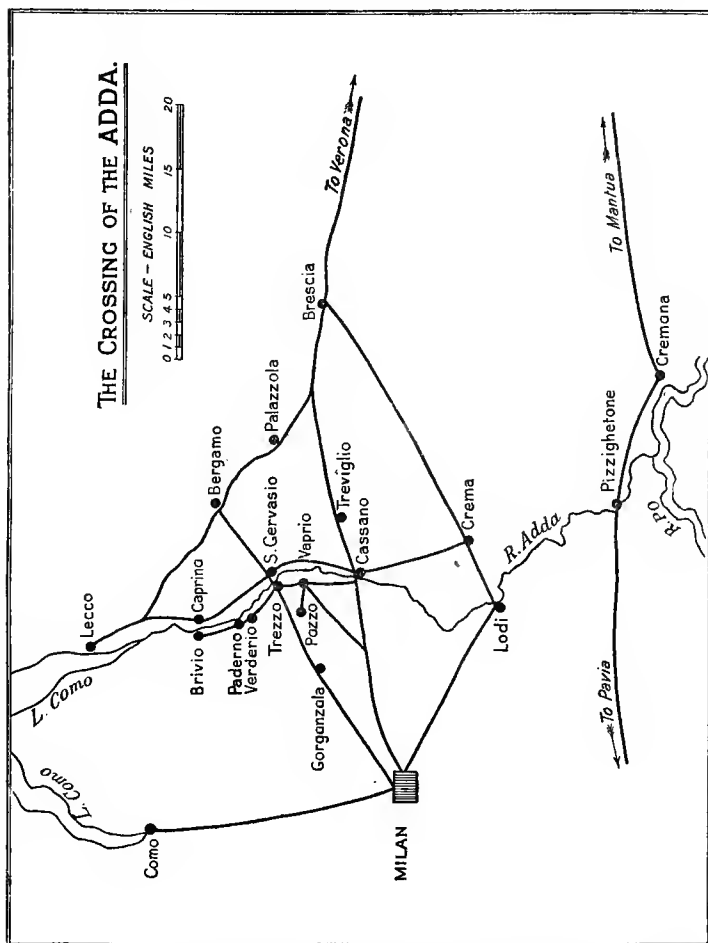
The river was in itself a good line of defence. It was wide enough to be unfordable ; in its northern portion, where it left the hills, the banks were steep and high, and from Cassano to its junction with the Po it ran through a wide and muddy bed, with more than one irrigation canal to increase the natural difficulties of the ground. It was crossed by bridges at only four places : Lecco, Cassano, Lodi, and Pizzighetone. But, however useful to an army of sufficient size, it was too long for that of Scherer. From Lake Como to the Po it covers a distance of 70 miles. Sérurier had to defend 20 miles, from Lecco to Trezzo ; Gregnet the next 18 miles, from Trezzo to Villa Pompeiana ; and Victor and Laboissière the last 32 miles to Pizzighetone. Against these forces stood 35,000 men between Lecco and Cassano, and 8000 at Pizzighetone. Bagration was moving north towards Lecco, with Rosenberg and Vukassovitch behind him. Suvorof himself stood at San Gervasio, opposite Trezzo, with the Austrian troops of Ott and Zopf. Melas faced Cassano with Fröhlich and Keim. Under these circumstances the value of Laboissière and a great part of Victor's division existed only on paper.

Few things in war are so difficult as to defend a long line of river against an enemy superior in numbers. If the troops on both sides are approximately equal in character, only a very grave miscalculation of time can prevent the assailant from crossing at one point or another, and making good his hold before sufficient numbers can be concentrated on the spot to defeat him. But nothing can be done when the defending army is strung along the whole line. Its only hope is in concentration and mobility. Scherer's army was as widely as possible dispersed, and he himself was the last man to move troops with the speed required of an opponent of Suvorof.

Suvorof's original plan was to cross first from San Gervasio to Trezzo, and he gave orders to that effect to

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Ott, sending the Cossacks and Vukassovitch to support him.<sup>1</sup> But on the night of the 25th he learned that the



enemy were in force at Lecco, and not wishing to leave Bagration without help against what he took to be Sérurier's whole division, he halted Vukassovitch at

<sup>1</sup> Mil. 286, 290 ; Fuchs, ii. 33, 35.

Caprino, 9 miles from Lecco, so that in case of need he might march to Bagration's assistance. Holding back from his main operations until definite news should arrive from the right flank, he told Melas to attack the next day at Cassano, and made himself ready to follow Ott at San Gervasio. At 8 o'clock in the morning of the 26th, Bagration, with three battalions of infantry and three regiments of Cossacks, came into touch with the enemy outposts and pursued them up to the walls of Lecco. Here were four French battalions and a squadron of cavalry under General Soyez. A battery of six guns covered the town across the lake, which at this point is only 300 yards wide. After a hard fight in the streets of the town the French were pressed out, but rallied among the gardens and vineyards, and with their superior numbers even threatened to cut Bagration's communications with the Russian main body. An appeal for help brought up Miloradovitch with a battalion of Grenadiers at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Miloradovitch was the senior officer, but saying "this is no place to think of ranks," he refused to take over the general command. The fresh battalion stopped the enemy's flanking movement, and two others coming up under Shveikovski finally turned the scale. The town was again occupied, an attempt at crossing in boats from the other bank was frustrated, and at 8 o'clock in the evening the French were in full retreat in the hills beyond.

This affair, which had cost the Russians 385 men killed and wounded, was not in fact necessary. Vukassovitch had found the enemy in very little strength at Brivio, opposite Caprino, and on the night of the same day began his preparations for crossing. If the thrust had been made at this point, instead of at Lecco, the French in Lecco would have been cut off, and must have retreated without a shot being fired. In the meantime a change had taken place on the French side which might have materially affected the campaign. Scherer had

been removed from his command, and replaced by Moreau. The latter was as clear-headed, bold, and popular with the troops as the former was weak, irresolute, and disliked, and the change of leader meant a great accession of strength to the French armies. Nevertheless it came too late to save them from disaster. Moreau wasted no time. He learned of his appointment at Lodi on the evening of the 26th. Without delay he mounted his horse and galloped to the General Headquarters, whence he scattered his orders for an immediate concentration. Gregnet was to draw in from the north upon Vaprio and Cassano, Victor to march up the river to Cassano, and Laboissière to come up from Pizzighetone to Lodi. Sérurier was at first ordered to move in towards Gregnet's left, but after the news of the threat from Vukassovitch this was countermanded, and he was told to leave one battalion at Trezzo, and go back with the rest of his troops to Brivio. Orders were at the same time sent to Milan and other points in the rear for all available units to make for the Adda. If these movements had been completed, there would have been some 16,000 men between Vaprio and Cassano, and, with luck, even a crossing from San Gervasio to Trezzo might have been frustrated by a rapid march from Vaprio, only 3 miles to the south. But Moreau was too late by at least a day, and when the fighting began he had only 10,500 men against 24,500. At midnight on the 26th Suvorof began to throw a pontoon bridge across the river at San Gervasio. With considerable difficulty, but without any opposition on the part of the French, the bridge was completed, and six companies of Jägers and some hundreds of Cossacks were already on the other side before the French battalion in Trezzo opened fire. After them came the first men of Ott's division, behind them Bagration's three Cossack regiments, coming at great speed from Lecco, and lastly Zopf's division. In all, 11,500 men crossed at this point, and the solitary French battalion against them lost its

only chance when it allowed the bridge to be built without resistance. Denisof's Cossacks, in spite of their previous exertions, were soon galloping round the rear of the town, and the French infantry barely succeeded in getting away to Vaprio.

Outside Vaprio they were met by Gregnet's division, just brought up from Cassano. Moreau himself hurried to the spot, and was nearly cut off by the Cossacks. But he had time to take up a position between Vaprio and Pozzo before the battle was joined, and to send a message to Sérurier, bidding him halt wherever he was. This last order seems incredibly foolish, and was in the result fatal to Sérurier. An attack, or even a threat by a force of several thousand men against Suworof's right rear would have been invaluable at the crisis of the battle, and once the main body was defeated, Sérurier, cut off from Milan and pressed against the mountains by both Suworof and Vukassovitch, could hardly expect to escape. The one chance both for Gregnet and for Sérurier himself was for the latter to march with all possible speed upon the sound of the guns. As things actually stood, Gregnet, with some assistance from Victor, had to face a great superiority in force, and Sérurier was left to fall like a ripe plum into the hands of the victorious army. Nevertheless, the matter was not easily decided. Gregnet held up against Ott, and even took the offensive, threatening to turn his right from the direction of Pozzo. The arrival of two battalions from Zopf did not change the aspect of affairs, and one of the new battalions was cut to pieces by the French cavalry. But a violent charge by Denisof's Cossacks drove back the French infantry into Pozzo, and the Cossacks, continuing their charge, fell upon four squadrons of *chasseurs à cheval* which had just come up from Milan, and chased them as far as Gorgonzola, 4 miles to the south-west. The Austrian infantry then attacked Pozzo and Vaprio simultaneously, and after some bitter fighting got hold of both. Moreau

thereupon decided that he could not stand his ground until Victor came to his help, and began to fall back southwards towards Inzago and Cassano. There he hoped to fight a second battle in conjunction with Victor. But hardly had his movement begun when he encountered the latter's troops, themselves in full flight.

Melas, with the divisions of Frohlich and Keim, 13,000 men in all, had attacked simultaneously with Suvorof. Cassano was a more formidable objective than Trezzo. Besides the river, there were two irrigation canals to be crossed, and between the left bank and one of these canals the French had thrown up earthworks across the road. Here 3000 men held out for five hours. But at 11 o'clock in the morning, under cover of a massed battery of thirty guns, the Austrians crossed the canal on a pontoon bridge, and carried the defences with a rush, taking all the guns and getting a foothold on the river bridge before the French could destroy it. This obstacle once passed, all was easy. The Austrians poured over the bridge, and drove the remainder of the defenders of Cassano into the face of the retreating Moreau.

The latter's only task now was to save his army from annihilation. The direct road to Milan through Gorgonzola was already in the hands of the Cossacks, and the troops who had been in action were ordered to march by roads to the south. Leaving 2000 prisoners and 19 guns in the hands of the victorious Allies, the beaten army hurried away. The last line of the French defences in Northern Italy had gone.<sup>1</sup>

There remained the troops about Lecco and the division of Sérurier. During the progress of the main battle, Vukassovitch had crossed at Brivio, and General Giglet with great difficulty carried his detachment into safety at Como. Soyez scrambled round the hills

<sup>1</sup> Mil. 292, *et seq.* Denisof's personal account is in *Russ. Star.* 1874), ii.

bordering the lake, crossed it in boats, and by a long march through Lugano eventually reached the banks of Lake Maggiore. The position of Sérurier was hopeless. He had remained with 3000 men at Verderio, 5 miles from the field of battle, and within earshot of the cannon. He received no news during the whole of the 27th, and remained for the night in a good defensive position facing westwards between Verderio and Paderno. At the latter point his right rested on the river, and at the former his left was strengthened with earthworks. Here on the 28th he was found by Vukassovitch. The latter did not expect to encounter anything but a few scattered parties of the French between the Adda and Milan. But some of his scouts, seeing and pursuing a few enemy horsemen, followed them into Paderno, and reported their discovery of a French army to Vukassovitch. The latter at once attacked in front and on both flanks, and on the arrival of the first of Rosenberg's Russians Sérurier capitulated. Nearly 3000 men were made prisoners at this point with 8 guns.<sup>1</sup>

Suvorof's first encounter with the French thus gloriously ended. The enemy's defences had been shattered, and out of the 18,000 men opposed to him, 2500 had been killed and wounded, and 5000 captured, with 27 guns, while his own losses were not more than 2000 men.<sup>2</sup> The operation, in view of the disparity in strength, had not been difficult. But the moral effect was enormous. In the previous year the French had swept everything before them. Now they had themselves been swept back with an injury to their prestige greater even than the great injury to their military power. Milan is only 12 miles from Cassano, and on the evening of the 28th the Cossacks of Motchanof were clattering through the streets of the city, cutting down all the French who had not time to take refuge in the citadel. The main army had already left the place, accompanied by a crowd of partisans of the Cisalpine Republic. A garrison of

<sup>1</sup> Mil. ii. 296.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. i. 298.



2400 in the citadel was all that was left of the French power in Lombardy.

On the 29th, Easter Sunday, Suvorof rode in through the Porta Orientale, and in the presence of a vast crowd knelt and kissed the hand of the Archbishop. "I am sent," he said, "to restore the ancient throne of the Pope, and to bring the people to obedience to their Sovereign. Help me in the sacred work." He then proceeded through the thronged streets to the house of the Duchess Castiglione, where Moreau had lodged before him. The next day he attended High Mass in the Cathedral, and entertained all the local magnates at dinner. To the same feast came Sérurier, to whom Suvorof quoted the distich of Lomonosof :

The lion magnanimous strikes low the evil race,  
Which with his greedy jaw the wolf devours apace.

"Translate those verses to the General," he said to Fuchs. "I repeated them to the Polish envoys after the taking of Warsaw." To Sérurier himself he played the magnanimous lion, sending him to France on his verbal promise not to serve again in that campaign.

So far his conduct at Milan had been entirely consistent with his rank and his mission. But the season of the year gave him an opportunity of puzzling the Italians more than a little. The Russian Easter customs include not only the presentation of coloured eggs, but a greeting, consisting of three kisses, on the lips and the two cheeks, accompanied by the words, "Christ is risen." Suvorof was not going to abandon a cherished Slav habit out of consideration for Latin dignity. Accordingly he embraced every acquaintance whom he met, not excepting Sérurier. His troops pursued the same course, and for a brief space the kisses bestowed by military men in the streets of Milan must have reminded detached spectators of an operatic chorus. The Italian population, feeling the kisses, and seeing the signs of the Cross, but not understanding the Russian words, must have been

hugely mystified. Fuchs heard more than one of his compatriots saying, "Christ is risen, padrone. Although you're an outlander and silly, all the same you're a man." And the three kisses followed. In particular, the citizens must have wondered why the strangers kissed men as well as women. It had not been the French way.<sup>1</sup>

Suvorof did not waste much time in initiating the Italians into the mysteries of the Orthodox Church. He began serious work at once. The necessary steps were taken for abolishing the Cisalpine Republic, for disarming the National Guard, and for restoring the old authorities. Chasteler drew up a plan for future operations, and on the 1st May it was sent to the Austrian Emperor. This plan involved the crossing of the Po by Suvorof for the purpose of defeating Macdonald, the clearing of the Alpine passes by the Austrians, the crushing of Masséna by the Archduke Charles, and a simultaneous invasion of Switzerland by the Austrians from the east and by Suvorof from the south. This plan was vetoed by the Emperor, who forbade Suvorof to cross the Po, and would not allow the Archduke to make anything more than a demonstration, until the Elector of Bavaria had shown clearly whether his army of 8000 men was to help the Austrians or oppose them, or until the second Russian army reached Austrian territory.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the open conflict between Suvorof and the Austrian Court began. The latter was playing for safety, while he played for victory. In the political as well as in the military sense France was weak and disorganised. After the Italian defeats she was dangerously exposed in Switzerland, and a heavy blow in that quarter must have resulted in a retreat to the frontier. As far as Suvorof was concerned, the direction to keep the army

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, *Miscellany*, 183. Fuchs was once called upon to save a child from a Cossack, who had seen a likeness to his own boy, away on the banks of the Don, and was kissing the young Italian with tears in his eyes. The Cossacks were known as the Russian Capuchins, on account of their long beards, but they were reputed to eat children.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. ii. 311, 314, 595, 598; Fuchs, ii. 47, 54, 88.

north of the Po was ineffective. By the time that it reached him, he was already across the river. But the Archduke Charles near Lake Constance and Count Bellegarde in the Tyrol remained passive. The whole strength of Austria was paralysed by fear of the insignificant army of Bavaria. In all there were about 120,000 efficient troops busily engaged in doing nothing along the Swiss frontier, while the French recovered from the shock of the loss of Northern Italy.<sup>1</sup>

With his immediate associates among the Austrians Suvorof remained on fairly good terms. Thugut and the War Council taxed his classical and modern vocabularies to the utmost. But on the whole his officers behaved well. Of Melas he was especially fond, though Fuchs records his jingling epigram, "J'ai vu Melas—Hélas!" He called him "Papa Melas," and treated him with the patronising affection which he used to bestow on Coburg. Nevertheless, Melas was desperately slow, and Suvorof was at last compelled to issue orders direct to the Austrian army as well as the Russian, requesting the subordinate commanders to report the orders to Melas as they received them. Chasteler was a great favourite of his, and an invaluable Chief of Staff. But the anomalous arrangement by which the Russians were dependent on the Austrians for their supplies caused not a little friction, and Suvorof soon invented German equivalents for his favourite epithet, "Can't teller." He would denounce an Austrian as a "Nicht-bestimmtsager" or "Not-clear-sayer," or sometimes as a "Bestimmtsager," a man who was very positive about things of which he knew nothing. The word "Unter-kunft" was new. By it he meant "Molly-coddling," and he applied it unsparingly.

It was not until a later date that the Austrian connection began to interfere seriously with his military designs. The stream of checks and prohibitions had not yet begun to reach him, and he busied himself after

<sup>1</sup> Mil. i. 318, 601; ii. 40, 435; Fuchs, *Misc.* 119.

the occupation of Milan with hunting the enemy out of Northern Italy, without much hindrance from Vienna. At first he expected an attack from Macdonald, and on the 13th May moved south towards Piacenza. But getting no information about Macdonald, and learning of an Austrian reverse on the St. Gothard, he abandoned this aggressive movement. Moreau had in the meantime taken up a strong position behind Alessandria, from which he could fall on Suvorof's rear if he marched against Macdonald, or anticipate him by a shorter route, if he made for Turin. Suvorof determined to cut the communications between Moreau and Switzerland. But Moreau's state was too bad for any daring operations in co-operation with the army of Switzerland. Food was running short, the Italians were in revolt on all sides, and his army was being steadily weakened by the detachment of escorts for his waggon trains. He decided to make for Genoa. After an attempt to break out by way of Marengo had been frustrated, he left a garrison in Alessandria, and made for the Apennines in two columns. On the 19th, Victor, with one of these, was already across the mountains.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as he heard of Moreau's retreat, Suvorof determined to march on Turin. The Austrians had recovered themselves in the Alps, and his right flank was now safe. Pizzighetone fell on the 9th, Ferrara and the Citadel of Milan on the 23rd. On the 25th Vukassovitch occupied the hill of the Superga, which dominates Turin. The French commandant, Fiorella, refused to surrender, but the gate of the town was opened by treachery, and the garrison was soon blockaded in the Citadel. Fiorella began to bombard the town, and Suvorof, rashly venturing too near the zone of danger, was picked up bodily by Denisof and carried into a place of safety.<sup>2</sup> The arsenal at Turin was a

<sup>1</sup> Mil. ii. 8 *et seq.*, 409 *et seq.* ; Fuchs, ii. 50 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> "Reminiscences of Denisof," *Russ. Star.* (1874), ii. 638. "Damn you ! " cried Suvorof, " what are you doing ? " and he grasped Denisof's

great prize, and 382 cannon, 15 mortars, 20,000 muskets, and a vast quantity of every sort of war material were captured in it. These afterwards supplied Suvorof's siege train.<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants received the Russians and Austrians with great enthusiasm. But at this point differences in policy began to make themselves seriously felt. Lombardy had been taken from Austria by the French, and it had been restored to Austria. But Piedmont had belonged, before the French conquest, to the independent Kingdom of Sardinia, and its exiled monarch was now living in Sardinia. Suvorof, acting as the restorer of the old order, recognised the King's rights. On his entry into Turin he issued a proclamation to the inhabitants, and declared that—

Henceforward peace, harmony, and order, both in the capital and in the whole of Piedmont, will be the object of my peculiar care. I believe that that end will best be secured by the restoration of the former order of things.<sup>2</sup>

A temporary Council was appointed, Count St. André was made Governor of Turin, and General Baron de Latour was entrusted with full powers of administration, military and political, throughout Piedmont. Suvorof was in fact occupying Piedmont as a military measure, with the intention of restoring it to the King. His proclamations issued to the Piedmontese soldiery and people had made this clear from the first. On the 6th May he announced his arrival in Piedmont in these terms :

The armies of their Highnesses the Roman and Russian Emperors have broken and scattered the French troops, who boasted themselves invincible. Those armies are now advancing into Piedmont to restore your good King.

hair. But he was wise enough not to pull it, and though they both fell into a hole, neither was hurt.

<sup>1</sup> Mil. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. ii. 110, 483.

Calling upon them to take service on the side of the Allies, he added :

To no other will you be called upon to swear allegiance than the King of Sardinia.<sup>1</sup>

These proclamations were dictated by natural justice, and they were admirably suited to the dramatic instinct, the generosity, and the monarchical prejudices of the Russian Tsar. But if the Tsar was pleased, the Kaiser was not, and Suvorof's dispositions at Turin, as well as the language of his proclamations, were received with lively displeasure at Vienna. The Austrian Court, for ever thinking more of the ancient glories of the House of Hapsburg than of the rights and liberties of the peoples of Europe and the best means of securing them in the face of the common enemy, viewed with grave disapproval these attempts to restore an independent kingdom in Northern Italy. The Emperor ordered Suvorof to go no further. He could not tolerate the establishment of any competing authority in Piedmont. Austria had now been engaged in war for eleven years, and had suffered considerable losses, which ought to be made up by levies from territories newly wrested from the enemy. Any troops raised in Piedmont should therefore be raised for the Emperor's service, and his alone, and political changes should await his further arrangements.<sup>2</sup> Suvorof's acts at Turin were accordingly rescinded. The duties of Governor were transferred to the Austrian Count Concini, and Melas was entrusted with all the arrangements for the maintenance of the armies. Piedmontese troops were raised for the Austrian service. From the 28th May all proclamations were issued in the name of the Austrian Emperor and signed by Melas, and the King of Sardinia was never mentioned in any of them.

<sup>1</sup> *Raccolta, etc.* p. 1. Compare his proclamation of the 8th May, *ibid.* 11.

<sup>2</sup> See the Emperor's rescript of the 17th May, set out in *Mil.* ii. 432.

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These interferences from Vienna infuriated Suvorof. But this was not all. The War Council actually issued orders direct to the Austrian Generals in Italy, not seldom overriding Suvorof's own. He overflowed into complaints, official and unofficial. To Razumovski, the Russian Ambassador at Vienna, he wrote on the 27th May, reciting his various grievances :

So that there's no need for me here, and I want to go home. This Cabinet decree has shattered the order of all my operations. . . . Every sectional general, not for one domestic matter but for everything, goes straight to the War Council, so has the right to intrigue in favour of its infatuated preconceptions. . . . Through this War Council sitting at the cross roads he [the Archduke] has the right to order them about and tie my hands. . . . Its lethargy forces lethargy on the Archduke. That Prince, though zealous for the common good, is as tied as I am, so far as co-operation with us is concerned, just as if he himself liked this fatal slowness. Otherwise it would have been possible in this campaign for me to answer for Italy, him for Germany and Switzerland. His High Excellency Baron Thugut will stick his nose into these arrangements. . . . I had picked out here a number of Piedmontese volunteer soldiers, and we could have armed them. . . . Would not this have been the best of arrangements for the French with their rapid conquests ? Their mighty *liberté* and *égalité* could not have stood long against Religion and Monarchy ! And what now ? Count Andrei Kirilovitch : men who would have entered our service in faith and faithfulness. . . . It's for all these important matters that I am here . . . otherwise I should have done better to go home from Vienna.

However the War Council has bothered me, its " one or two campaigns " took me one month. . . .<sup>1</sup>

On another date he wrote in the same style :

I am hampered by flattery, my bitterest enemy. I am very weary of the diplomatic style, with its double-faced witchcraft. No leisure for sleep. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, ii. 193.

The Austrian generals are more like recruits. By God's help the campaign will end. . . . Either a Thirty Years' War or Campo Formio, and worse than young Bonaparte's. Paris would have lain open to us in the next campaign. The Adda was the Rubicon. We crossed it in the teeth of the enemy. . . . Hardly one of them escaped. I learnt only here that they ran here like sheep, and the generals foremost. In the same way every other river in the world can be crossed. The Defensive is the Offensive. . . . Oh God, how useful the Piedmontese army would have been to us; we could have discharged it later, if we didn't want it. I am consoled in my labours by the gracious rescript of his Imperial Russian Highness. For the Saviour's sake, don't hinder me !<sup>1</sup>

He had, in fact, done far more than the Austrian War Council had expected. So far as Italy was concerned, there was nothing left of the French except the remnants of Moreau's army in the Genoese Riviera and the army of Naples under General Macdonald somewhere to the south of the Apennines. Similar vigour against the French in Switzerland should produce similar results, and the campaign of the following year would be fought on French territory. But the timidity of the War Council was not in the north frustrated by the energy of a second Suvorof.

After long inactivity, the principal Austrian armies on the Rhine began to move early in May, and their immediate success sufficiently condemned their previous lethargy. The French were first driven out of Graubunden. Three Austrian forces, together 38,000 strong, pushed the 13,000 French, who defended that region, towards the west. The Archduke then felt able to advance upon Zurich round the western end of Lake Constance. The French army, among whose commanders were Ney, Soult, and Oudinot, gave the leisurely Austrians more than one lesson in the art of marching and fighting. But the odds were too great,

<sup>1</sup> *Voronts. Arkh.* xxiv. 323.



and they were eventually pressed back everywhere. On the 4th June the main armies of the Archduke and Masséna fought a pitched battle to the east of Zurich. The Austrians were 42,000 strong, the French only 15,000, and Masséna, in spite of his strongly fortified position on the hills, was at last compelled to abandon the town and cross the Limat. The Archduke then became once more motionless. With 70,000 men at his disposal against a French force of half that number he did nothing except send Jellacic to open up communications with the army of Italy by way of the St. Gothard. The strategic initiative, assumed with such good results, was again abandoned to the French.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of June the situation of the army in Italy was not secure. The enemy had been driven out of the great plain, but he had the choice of three ways by which he might return: through Switzerland, through the Western Alps, and from the south over the Apennines. All these lines had to be covered by Suvorof, and while the danger from the south was the greatest, it was nevertheless necessary to employ part of the troops in guarding the passes from Switzerland, Savoy, and the Dauphiné. From the south, also, the enemy might advance in one of two ways, and the problem was to dispose the main army in such a way as to be able to meet an attack from either direction. By the 8th June the army was thus widely distributed. Suvorof himself, with 21,700 men, was stationed at Turin. Bellegarde was at Alessandria with Schveikowski, and at need, by calling in Tchubarof and Seckendorf from Acqui, could bring up his total forces to 16,700; Ott, with 7400 men, was at Reggio, with outposts beyond the Apennines and beyond Modena on the way to Bologna. Kray, besieging Mantua with nearly 20,000 men, Klenau at Ferrara with 5000, and the 10,000 men under Haddik engaged in guarding the Alpine Passes, were too far away and too busily engaged to be of

<sup>1</sup> Mil. ii. 120 *et seq.* Jellacic is pronounced Yellatchich.

use in case of a French attack. But Fröhlich and Vukassovitch in the valley of the Tanaro, with nearly 8000 men, were within easy reach of both Turin and Alessandria. About 30,000 men could be rapidly collected at either of these places, and it was unlikely that any French force crossing the mountains from the Genoese Riviera would be of substantially greater strength.

On the 9th June he came to the conclusion that the attack would be directed towards Alessandria. This was due to defective information, partly arising from the deliberate scattering of false reports by Moreau.<sup>1</sup> Apparently Macdonald had joined Moreau by sea, and both would attack together from the Riviera. Calling in Ott, Fröhlich, and Vukassovitch, and asking even Kray to send as much cavalry as he could spare, Suvorof left Turin on the 10th with 10,000 men, expecting to meet and defeat the united enemy at Alessandria. Making ample provision for the security of Turin, Milan, and the line of the Po, he gave orders for bridges to be constructed on the Bormida and Tanaro, so as to give the utmost freedom of manœuvring to his army in the field.<sup>2</sup> He was still ignorant where the blow would actually fall. But when the shock did come he leapt at once into full activity.

One of his preparatory instructions sounds a characteristic note. He wrote a special letter to Bagration :

Count Peter Ivanovitch. The troops of Count Bellegarde from the Tyrol will come up to Alessandria, uninstructed, strangers to the handling of bayonet and sword. As soon as your Serenity comes to Asti, visit me, and set off at once to Alessandria, and there reveal to the Bellegarde troops the secret of beating the enemy

<sup>1</sup> Moreau said afterwards that he believed Suvorof to be too credulous. Orlof, *Suvorof na Trebbii*, 88, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> His detailed instructions were most complete and provided for every contingency. The credit for them should no doubt be given, in large measure, to Chasteler and the Austrian staff officers. See *Mil.* ii. 542 ; *Fuchs*, ii. 240, 282, 293.

with the cold steel, and carefully adapt them to this conquering attack ; two or three lessons will be enough for the instruction of all the detachments, but if there is time, they can study more by themselves ; but do you unlearn them how to retreat.<sup>1</sup>

However carefully he might prepare for a possible failure, Suvorof never had any doubt of success. Field works at Pavia and Milan were all very well, but the business was going to be settled by the bayonet.

His own march upon Alessandria was not wanting in rapidity. His troops left Turin at 2 o'clock in the morning of the 10th June, and at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 11th they arrived at Asti, 33 miles away, in spite of the bad condition of the roads and the heavy rain. At 10 in the evening they resumed their march, in company with Fröhlich's Austrian division, sending all the heavy baggage to Valenza, and making ready for the instant encounter with the enemy. At 2 in the afternoon of the 12th they reached Alessandria.<sup>2</sup> There were now in that neighbourhood, under Suvorof's immediate command, 34,000 men. Vukassovitch was already on his way with 4400 more ; Ott, with 5300, was on the road from Piacenza to Voghera ; and Hohenzollern, with 4500, was at Modena. Suvorof therefore hoped to meet the enemy with nearly 50,000 men.

Unfortunately he was at once faced with the difficulty of feeding this large number of troops so hastily thrown upon the Austrian commissariat. The Austrians declared that the task was beyond their powers, and on the evening of the 13th Rosenberg, with a large body of Russian troops, started on the return journey to Asti. On the assumption that the French attack would be from Genoa, this manœuvre was harmless enough. But, in the actual event, it was highly dangerous. Rosenberg was overtaken at 5 o'clock in the morning by a letter from Suvorof, the last words in his own hand.

<sup>1</sup> Mil. ii. 545.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 227, 547.

Latest news. The French like bees and from well-nigh all quarters are swarming to Mantua. We must hasten upon them. Wherever this overtakes you, after resting as much as may be necessary, hasten to join us. We shall start soon. They are in force; God with us.

Forgive me. It is circumstances that have given you so much trouble.<sup>1</sup>

Suvorof had been badly served by his spies. So far from being carried by sea to Genoa, to join in an attack on Alessandria from the south, Macdonald, strengthened by the transfer of Victor's division from Moreau's army to his own, had crossed the Apennines to the south-east, and on the evening of the 11th June his right wing was in occupation of Bologna. In all, he had with him 36,000 men, and after passing the mountain barrier, was turning west to crush Suvorof against the army of Moreau, who was simultaneously making towards Alessandria from the south.<sup>2</sup>

The two French Commanders had been in communication since the 29th May, and while the difficulty of traversing the mountain paths between Pisa and Genoa had prevented a full exchange of ideas, the main outlines of their joint enterprise were clear. It was agreed that Macdonald should set his troops in motion from Tuscany on the 9th June, while Moreau started from Genoa on the 17th. Both armies had badly needed rest and refitting, Macdonald's after an exhausting march from Southern Italy, and Moreau's after its equally damaging if shorter retreat from Lombardy.<sup>3</sup> Once on the road, both moved with great rapidity, and Macdonald's crossing of the Apennines was worthy of an opponent of Suvorof. He was, in fact, too quick for Moreau. All his troops were in the plain on the 14th June, a week

<sup>1</sup> Mil. ii. 230.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. ii. 235.

<sup>3</sup> Macdonald's march from Southern Italy to Florence occupied eighteen days. In that time he covered about 270 miles, an average of 15 miles a day. The country was full of armed insurgents, and provided little or no food. The army reached Florence half-starved and in rags.

after leaving Tuscany, and in the seven days they had marched 150 miles and beaten the Austrians under Hohenzollern at Modena.

The French plan was daring, and against a meaner adversary might have ended in a brilliant and decisive victory. But no operation of war is so difficult or so dangerous as to carry two different armies over separate and diverging mountain passes into a plain, where an enemy of even approximately equal strength is waiting to receive them. If they unite before one of them is engaged, they may together crush the enemy. But everything depends upon the punctual and exact performance of every stage of the joint undertaking, and the arrival of both forces intact at the prearranged point of union. The enemy must be fought by both together, or, at least, one must be able to hold him until the other comes on to the field. But the matter is never entirely in the hands of the co-operating leaders. The utmost diligence on their part cannot ensure success, unless the enemy himself permits it. A sluggish opponent may allow the plan to succeed. But he must almost invariably have the opportunity, if only he has accurate information, of moving upon one of the approaching armies before the other can touch him. Suvorof himself was to learn to his cost what fatal consequences may follow upon an unexpected delay, when the enemy is bold and resolute. On the present occasion he showed by his own action what such an enemy can do, even when there has been no substantial mistake in the calculations of the attacking commanders, and he himself is taken by surprise. Macdonald reached Modena on the 12th June, and Moreau was not in the neighbourhood of Voghera till the 19th, when Macdonald's fate had already been decided. The interval was sufficient to give Suvorof a complete victory, though he did not know until early on the 13th that any danger whatever was threatening him from the direction of Modena.

Hohenzollern had been attacked at Modena by Ollivier, who had crossed the mountains from Pistoia, and he had been flung back with heavy loss towards Mantua. It was open to Macdonald either to follow him across the Po to Mantua, raise the siege of that fortress, and cut the communications of the Allies through Verona, or else to inflict a sanguinary defeat upon some other isolated detachment. In either case Suvorof must act quickly. He had been caught napping. But to catch Suvorof napping was not to destroy him. He had fixed upon Alessandria as a good base for operations against an attack from Genoa. But it was not a bad base for operations in the direction of Modena. His decision was taken on the 13th, as soon as he heard of the disaster to Hohenzollern. He must settle accounts with Macdonald before Moreau appeared on the scene. On the 14th he set out with all speed towards the enemy. Bellegarde was left at Alessandria, and Suvorof took with him not more than 25,000 men, of whom three-fifths were Russian.

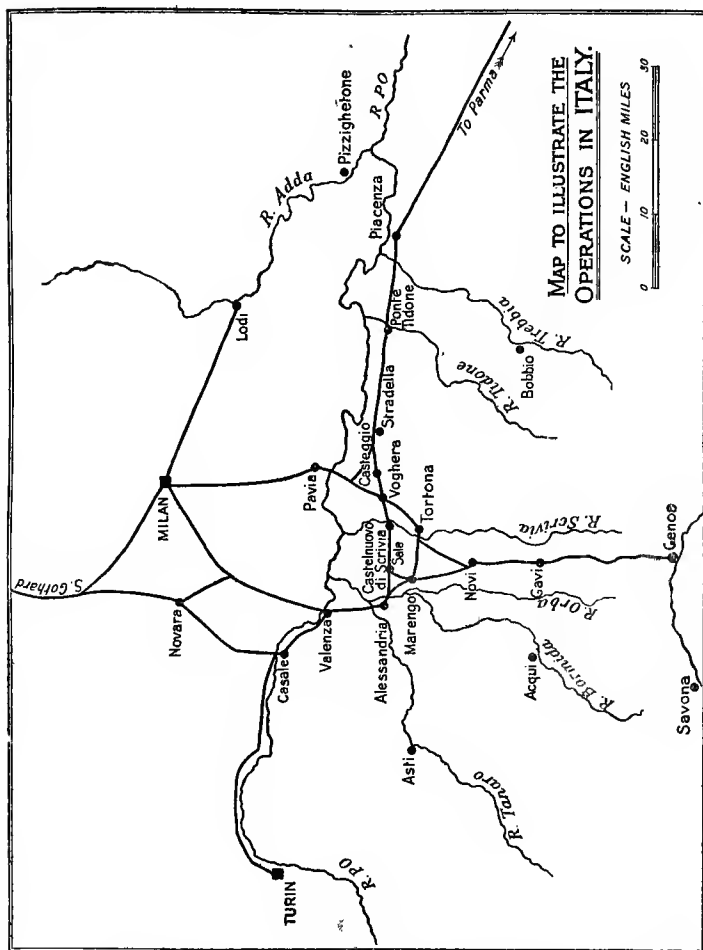
Macdonald, on the other hand, marched as rapidly against Suvorof. Mantua could wait. If Suvorof were beaten it must be relieved, and until Suvorof was beaten it could not be relieved. Macdonald, therefore, pursuing the original design, threw out Montrichard in the direction of Mantua to occupy the attention of Kray, stationed Ollivier at Modena, and on the 13th began to march with the rest of his troops along the great road, to fling all his weight upon Ott at Parma. On the 14th, Victor descended unopposed the valley of the Taro, and occupied Borgo San Donnino, where he was joined by Macdonald's advance guard under Dombrowski. On the 15th, Victor and Dombrowski reached Fiorenzolla on the Arda. On the same day Ott, obeying Suvorof's orders, had retreated as far as Piacenza. He had been told to fight a delaying action between Parma and that place.<sup>1</sup> He therefore took

<sup>1</sup> Mil. ii. 240.

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up a position along the River Nura, and on the 16th his outposts were already in action.

Suvorof was by this time in full march to his assist-



ance. He ordered Kray to detach as many troops as possible to assist him, and also to help Hohenzollern and Klenau in threatening Macdonald's rear. Belle-

garde was instructed to cover the troops blockading the citadel of Alessandria, and to protect Suvorof himself against the threatened attack from Genoa. The Commander-in-Chief also requested Haddik to send a brigade to Turin, and begged the Archduke Charles to replace Haddik's troops by a detachment of his own.<sup>1</sup> To Keim he sent a flying note :

DEAR GENERAL—I am going to Piacenza to beat Macdonald. Hurry on your siege works against the citadel of Turin, or else I shall sing a *Te Deum* before you.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately the striking army was still dispersed. Rosenberg was behind Suvorof and did not reach Alessandria till the evening of the 14th. There he found the main body, held up by a delay in throwing the bridge across the Bormida, and no real start was possible till 10 o'clock on the night of the 15th. Even then Tchubarof, coming from Acqui with three of Seckendorf's battalions, was still further in the rear, and arrived at Alessandria after all the rest of the troops, including those of Rosenberg, had left the town. During this enforced delay Suvorof had issued a general order, emphasising his favourite injunctions :

Defeat the enemy with cold steel, bayonet, swords, and pikes. . . . Don't slow down during an attack. When the enemy is broken, shattered, then pursue him at once, and don't give him time either to collect or re-form. If he surrenders, spare him ; only order him to throw down his arms. During the attack call on the enemy to surrender. . . . Spare nothing, don't think of your labours ; pursue the enemy night and day, so long as anything is left to be destroyed.<sup>3</sup>

These directions were all very well. But the delay had nearly ruined Ott. On the 16th, Victor, with about

<sup>1</sup> With great reluctance Kray sent a regiment of Dragoons. He had been ordered by the War Council at Vienna not to spare a single man from the siege of Mantua. Mil. ii. 547, 548 ; Fuchs, ii. 194.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. ii. 241.

<sup>3</sup> Fuchs, ii. 304.



7000 men, came into touch with his 6000 at Piacenza, and Ott, leaving seven companies in the citadel, destroyed the bridge over the Po, and fell back behind the Tidone, 5 miles to the west. Fortunately for him, the French were still distributed over a great distance along the road. When Macdonald's troops had all reached the plain, Dombrovski and Rusca were 10 miles, Watrin 16 miles, and Ollivier and Montrichard more than 70 miles to the east of Victor.<sup>1</sup> When Victor attacked Ott at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 17th, this straggling army had been brought somewhat together, and there were sufficient troops at hand to give the French an overwhelming superiority. Victor himself attacked Ott's left at Verrato di Sopra, Rusca attacked his centre across the high-road at Ponte Tidone, and Salme's brigade was held in reserve. The ground was difficult, cut up in every direction by ditches, fences, gardens, and vineyards, but the River Tidone itself, like all the other Lombard rivers at that season, was almost dry, and its wide sandy bed could be crossed at any point. The French came on rapidly, until Ott was reinforced by some of the advanced troops of Melas at 10 o'clock. His troops were now about 9000 against 16,000 French, and he succeeded in making a stand at the village of Sarmato, posting a battery of 8 guns, covered by a deep ditch, by the high-road. But by 3 o'clock in the afternoon a violent attack on his right wing had carried this battery, the Austrians were falling back to San Giovanni, and Dombrovski's Poles at Caramello were threatening to turn their right and cut off their retreat. At this point Suvorof himself came upon the scene.

The march from Alessandria had been made with his usual remorseless energy, and the phenomenal powers of his troops redeemed the time lost at the Bormida. They started from the Bormida in two columns. The left column, under Melas, 9 Austrian

<sup>1</sup> Rousset, *Souvenirs de Macdonald*, 90.

battalions and 12 squadrons of cavalry, marched by Sale and Castelnuovo di Scrivia. The right column, under Rosenberg, 20 Russian battalions and 4 regiments of Cossacks, was at first ordered to go through San Giuliano to Tortona. But its direction was changed at San Giuliano, and to avoid the delay of bridging the Scrivia near Tortona, it was sent to Sale. From that point it marched on the heels of the Austrians. The whole army thus moved east in a long train down the road along the right bank of the Po, as the French moved west to meet them.<sup>1</sup> The Austrian advance guard under Daller succeeded in getting into touch with Ott about 10 o'clock in the morning of the 17th. But, as has already been described, he was not in sufficient strength to resist the increasing pressure of the French, and as the rest of Melas' column came up the enemy also were reinforced.

Everything depended upon the ability of the Russian main body to reach the scene of the combat before the outnumbered and exhausted Austrians were driven into absolute rout. The soldiers were called upon to do their utmost, and their advance was made at such a speed, that a casual spectator, meeting them on the road, might have supposed it to be a retreat. The Cossacks, under Bagration, pushed on ahead, and the infantry followed as best it could. For miles behind the marching battalions the road, the ditches, and the fields were marked with the bodies of men who had fallen from the ranks, not a few of them already dead from exhaustion. A long trail of stragglers toiled after them in the dust, too weak to fulfil their duty, but too proud to give way entirely to fatigue. Suvorof rode with his men, galloping up and down the labouring column, breaking out into homely jests and proverbial wisdom, crying: "Forward, forward, forward—the head doesn't wait for the tail," praising those who kept on, encouraging those who fell behind, and

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, ii. 316.

every now and then dismounting to examine, from some house or hillock, how many of his troops were still at his command, before clambering into his saddle and plunging once more into the dust.<sup>1</sup>

The Cossacks came first into action, with orders to "Take the enemy army prisoner," crying, "*Bas les armes—jetez les armes*," and paying special attention to the guns and the Generals with their Staffs.<sup>2</sup> Approaching San Giovanni, Suvorof took the four regiments of Cossacks and the Austrian Dragoons, and galloped forward with Bagration. Mounting a knoll shortly before four o'clock, he saw the critical situation of Ott's right wing, and launched two Cossack and two Dragoon regiments against Dombrovski, sending the other two Cossack regiments to the left. The attack was completely successful. Dombrovski's cavalry were broken, and his infantry thrown into confusion. Ott thus obtained a short space in which to re-form. At four o'clock the Russian Grenadiers marched on to the field. So great had been their effort that Bagration, begging for a short rest, declared that the companies which left Alessandria about 100 strong, now contained, on the average, only 40 men each. "Only 40 to a company?" exclaimed Suvorof. "Macdonald will only have 20. Forward! Victory! Hurra!" And he ordered his men directly into the fight, flags displayed, drums beating, trumpets sounding, and the choir of every battalion singing a national air. The soldiers responded nobly, and men who were well-nigh too exhausted to carry their muskets, advanced through the crumbling Austrian ranks straight upon the triumphant French, and drove them back at the point

<sup>1</sup> For this march see Starkof, 127; "Reminiscences of Denisof," *Russ. Star*. One of Suvorof's devices, according to Starkof, was to teach the men a few words of French. When a group showed signs of collapse, it was the duty of the sergeants to call upon them to repeat their lesson. Weariness was thus forgotten, while the jaded scholars struggled over a few more of those heart-breaking versts.

<sup>2</sup> Fuchs, ii. 316.

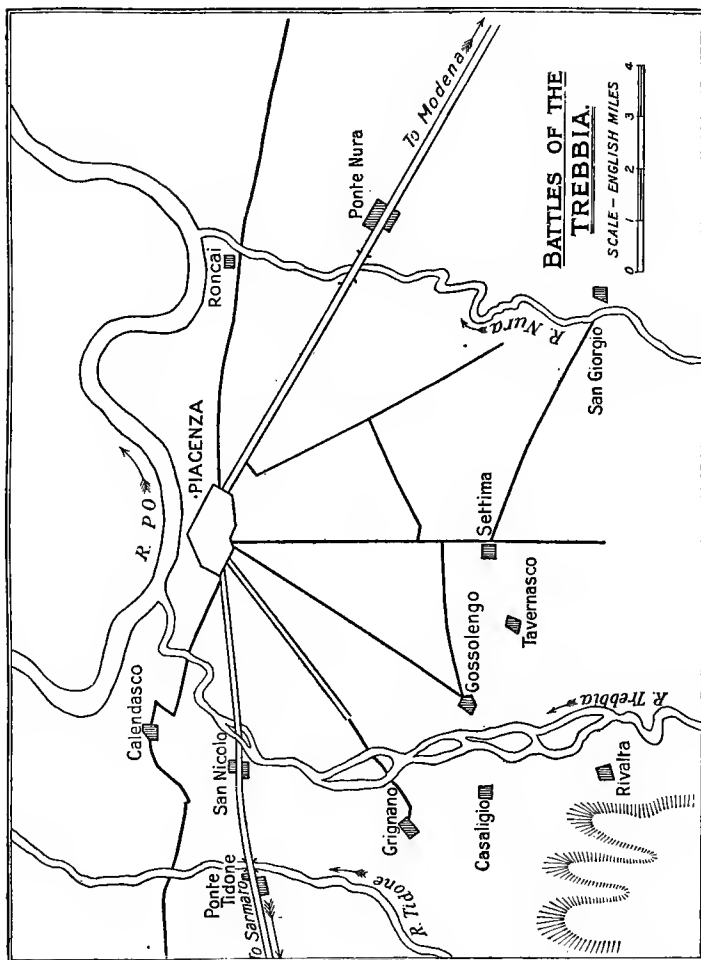
of the bayonet. The attack was general. Ott advanced on both sides of the road, Gortchakof, with two Cossack regiments, in support on his left, and Bagration with the Russian infantry on his right. Little time was lost in musketry fire. The Field-Marshal galloped along his front, crying: "Forward, forward! Cut them down, smash them!" and, with banners, drums, trumpets, and singing, the weary troops moved steadily to the attack.

They were met as steadily by the French. But nothing could resist their determined pressure. Sarmato was passed. Some of Dombrovski's battalions were completely dispersed, and a French demi-brigade coming to their assistance was driven back by the triumphant Cossacks. Dombrovski was pushed across the Tidone, and the cavalry of Suworof's right were able to wheel to the left and attack Victor and Salme in flank. Forming square, the French infantry stubbornly retreated across the river, and only the fall of darkness stopped the Russian advance. Scattered groups of Cossacks and Dragoons were still pulling their horses out of ditches, or leading them by the bridle through the tangle of fences and vineyards, long after night had come.

The first day's fighting, begun so threateningly, had ended in an unequivocal Russian success. Ott had escaped destruction, and the French had been so severely handled that during the night they fell back behind the Trebbia, covered by Salme.<sup>1</sup> The performance of Suworof's army had been one of the most remarkable in the history of war. In the full heat of an Italian June, they marched 53 miles in thirty-six hours, and going straight into the heart of a doubtful battle, drove the enemy off the field after five hours of stubborn fighting. The Austrians had shown themselves in no way inferior to the Russians. In Suworof's hands both nations were capable of equal endurance: evidence at

<sup>1</sup> Rousset, 92.

once of his capacity and theirs. Few leaders have been worthy of such desperate exertions on the part of their



armies, and few armies have given their leaders the confidence that they could safely be called upon to make them.

The night was spent by both forces in rest, but both commanders were resolved to renew the combat next morning. Suvorof's motives are obvious. Moreau was somewhere behind him, and Macdonald must be completely defeated before the other French army came within reach. Macdonald's reasons are not unimpeachable. Watrin's division had come up on the evening of the 17th, too late to take part in the fight, and allowing for a total loss of about 1500 men, there were now on the French side 22,000 against at least as many on the Russian. Ollivier and Montrichard were still a whole day's journey behind him, and it would have been only prudent for Macdonald to withdraw still further in their direction, keeping Suvorof entangled until Moreau was ready to strike. But Macdonald was determined to fight, partly because of the losses inevitably incident to a retreat, and partly because he felt bound to keep his agreement with Moreau. In any case, he could easily defend himself in such broken country, and would not have much difficulty in holding out till Ollivier and Montrichard appeared on the scene.<sup>1</sup>

The scene of this second battle was the space traversed by the River Trebbia, between the Apennines and the Po. This is an open plain about 10 miles across, intersected, like the rest of the neighbourhood, by ditches, avenues, vineyards, and gardens. Through it runs the bed of the river, a sandy waste about 1000 yards wide, traversed by a few shallow streams of water. Over the river bed troops could manœuvre with ease, and the French were accordingly disposed on both banks without any risk. Salme was posted across the high road at San Niccolo, with a few squadrons thrown out as far to the left as Grignano, and Dombrowski held Casaligio. Rusca and Victor were on the right bank of the river in the centre, while Watrin lay at Piacenza, and blockaded the Austrians in the citadel.

Suvorof determined to throw his weight upon the

<sup>1</sup> Rousset, 93.

enemy's left. Officers had been sent out along the roads to get in as many as possible of the men who had fallen out from the march of the previous day, and Tchubarof was ordered to hurry on with all speed. Unfortunately, Tchubarof did not arrive in time to be of any use, and Kray sent no help that day from Mantua, so that only the combatants of the 17th, reinforced by the recovered stragglers, were at hand on the 18th. In all, Suvorof had no more than 22,000 men at his disposal, and was about equal in strength to Macdonald. One step he took, which hinted at his recognition of the possibility of defeat. He ordered a bridge to be thrown across the Po at Parpanese, 12 miles above Piacenza. This served two purposes. If Kray sent help, it could reach Suvorof by way of the new bridge; and if the Field-Marshal lost the day's battle, he could withdraw by it to the north bank of the Po, in full communication with Turin to the west and Mantua to the east, and with the river between him and his combined enemies. The first motive was probably uppermost in his own mind, the second in that of his Austrian staff. His own line of retreat being thus secured, he disposed his attacking troops so as to cut into that of the enemy, force a way between their left wing and the Apennines, and drive them into the Po.

The attack was to be made in three columns, and with his usual confidence he marked out their line of advance as far as the River Nura, 10 miles beyond the Trebbia. Rosenberg was in command of the right and centre columns, and Melas of the left. The first, consisting of the troops of Bagration and Schveikovski, was to make for Casaligio. The second, consisting of Förster's division, was directed through Grignano. The third, Ott's division, was to move along the high road, pick up the garrison of Piacenza, and then march to the Nura. Fröhlich's division was kept in reserve, and was to follow Ott as far as the east bank of the Tidone, and then, bearing to the right, support Förster.

Three Cossack regiments and 12 squadrons of Austrian Dragoons were attached to the right column, one Cossack regiment and 6 squadrons to the centre, and one Cossack regiment and 6 squadrons to the left, while 6 squadrons of Dragoons remained in reserve with Fröhlich. The field artillery was similarly distributed; 6 guns, a howitzer, and a battery of horse artillery with the right column, 2 guns with Förster, and 2 with Fröhlich. The troops were to deploy at 2 miles from the enemy, but if the latter were encountered sooner than was expected, they were to deploy at once "without confusion, but also without pedantry or superfluous accuracy. . . . The word 'halt' not to be used. It is neither for drill nor battle. Attack, strike, cut down, hurra, drums, music." <sup>1</sup>

The right and centre columns, with the support of Fröhlich, would thus throw a weight of 17,500 men upon Dombrovski and Victor, 10,000 strong, while Ott could only bring 4500 to bear upon Salme and Rusca, who between them had 6000. The disparity in strength was dangerous, especially having regard to the difficulty of moving across the wide gap of broken ground between the centre and left. If the enemy proved as vigorous as Suvorof ought to have expected, "hurra, drums, music" could hardly have saved his left wing from destruction, and himself from being cut off from the bridge across the Po. This isolation of his weak left wing was one of those dispositions which are described by historians as rash or bold, according to the result of the whole battle. Possibly Suvorof intended, by thus refusing his left, to lure the enemy into a rash advance on that side, while he fell with unexpected and irresistible force upon their other wing. Whatever his intentions, they were in the actual event frustrated by Melas, who was afraid of Ott's weakness and refused to allow Fröhlich to bear to the right.

It was already two o'clock when Bagration came

<sup>1</sup> Mil. ii. 261.



into touch with Dombrovski, and Suvorof gave the order for a general attack. This was not expected by the French, or at least by Salme, who had actually asked leave to go for a few hours to Piacenza.<sup>1</sup> As on the previous day, the first shock fell upon Dombrovski, and after a savage hand-to-hand combat, the Poles were again driven back. One battalion was cut off and laid down its arms, and the loss of the whole division amounted to 500 killed, a flag, 2 guns, and 600 prisoners. Victor, with his own division and part of Rusca's, came to the rescue of the fragments of Dombrovski's troops, and for a time was able to pass round the higher ground to Bagration's right, and even threaten his rear. But Bagration threw fresh masses of infantry upon him, and cleared the right wing with the bayonet. At the same moment Schweikovski came up on Bagration's left, and drove back the enemy who were pressing him on that side. By this time, also, Förster had cleared Grignano of the infantry of Rusca's division, and the right and centre columns had thus attained all their first objectives.

But the divisions of Ollivier and Montrichard were now coming into action. The former marched direct along the high road. The latter, inclining to his left, filled up the gap between the high road and the troops of Victor and Rusca around Casaligio. There he met Förster, driving Rusca out of Grignano, and a vigorous battle was joined between approximately equal forces along the left bank of the river. This was ended by the retreat of Victor and Dombrovski, who were pressed back as far as Settima. Montrichard in his turn, his left flank being thus uncovered, was bound to withdraw to Gossolengo. This second stage of the battle ended, like the first, in favour of the Russians.

Meanwhile, Ott had been in action on the left. Salme, disregarding Macdonald's instructions to fall back to the river before being attacked,<sup>2</sup> found himself exposed

<sup>1</sup> Rousset, 93, 94.

<sup>2</sup> Rousset, 93, 94.

to both Ott and Fröhlich, the latter of whom Melas had directed to the left instead of the right. They attacked Salme with great energy about five o'clock. Salme himself was wounded, and the same fate befell two of his successors in command, while his troops were driven across the river in great disorder. The fire of the French artillery on the right bank saved them from a complete overthrow. But they lost about 800 killed, and 700 remained prisoners in the hands of the Austrians.

By the time that Salme's brigade had succeeded in re-forming itself, darkness had already fallen. The second day had ended, more definitely than the first, in Suvorof's favour. But the crushing victory had not yet been gained, and the enemy had still a considerable number of fresh troops at his disposal, and was even superior in numbers. Only part of Victor's and Ollivier's divisions had been seriously engaged, and Watrin had not been in action at all. For this indecisive result Melas was undoubtedly to blame. With the assistance of Fröhlich's eight battalions, the success of the right wing would have been more thorough, and the want of them on the right was not compensated by the services which they had been able to render Ott. In view of the late hour at which Ott came into action, it is clear that he could not have been seriously in danger before nightfall. If he had done no more than hold his ground the enemy might have been pushed round, pivoting on their right, until they found themselves with their backs to the Po and the roads to the Apennines, or even to Modena, in the hands of Suvorof. In that case Macdonald could not have escaped with anything resembling an army. As things stood on the night of the 18th, after a day's marching and fighting, the relative positions of the two forces were much the same as on the night of the 19th.

During the night the battle was unexpectedly renewed. Three French battalions crossed the river and attacked Ott, and an obscure and useless scramble

began in the river bed and lasted for an hour. It ceased at eleven o'clock, but not until the fighting had become general, and Rosenberg and four of his battalions penetrated into the French lines in front of Settima, and remained there until morning.<sup>1</sup> On the next day the battle began again in earnest. Suvorof at last received reinforcements in the shape of Tchubarof's three battalions and six squadrons of Dragoons from Kray, but these were not actually at his disposal until after the fighting had begun. He made little change in his general dispositions, but reiterated and emphasised his order to Melas to send Fröhlich to the support of Förster. Macdonald, on his part, had decided on this third day to attack. Dombrovski was to advance first through Rivalta, and then bear in upon the Russian right flank, while Victor and Rusca marched directly upon Casaligio. Ollivier's line was across the high road, and Montrichard's ran from the road to Grignano. Watrin and Salme were to operate on the right between the high road and the Po, and the former was if possible to get between Ott and the river.<sup>2</sup> All Macdonald's troops were thus on this day in the line of battle, and he had no general reserve, while Suvorof, as before, relied upon Fröhlich to turn the scale if the balance began to incline against him at any point.

The battle began about ten o'clock with a general advance of the French,<sup>3</sup> though Montrichard did not bring the bulk of his men into action until noon. They crossed the river in columns, headed by clouds of skirmishers, and with cavalry in the intervals. As before, Dombrovski's Poles came first into contact with the Russians, moving round the slopes of the hills, and threatening to turn their right. Suvorof promptly launched Bagration against them. The infantry charged them in front, the Cossacks and

<sup>1</sup> Gryazef.

<sup>2</sup> Rousset, 96.

<sup>3</sup> Suvorof had intended to attack at 6 A.M.; Macdonald at 9. The delay on both sides was no doubt due to fatigue.

Dragoons on both flanks ; and, scrambling up the hills, the unfortunate Poles barely succeeded in crossing the river, leaving another flag, a gun, and 400 men in the hands of Bagration. This third overthrow completed the ruin of the division, and Dombrovski took no further part in the action.

This vigorous advance of the Russian right left a dangerous gap between Bagration and Schveikovski's infantry. Victor and Rusca seized the opportunity, and attacked Schveikovski with horse and foot, cutting him off completely from Bagration, and driving him back into Casaligio. One regiment, Rosenberg's Grenadiers, was actually surrounded. It was thrown into square, and firing steadily on all sides, continued to present a bold front to the clamorous and exultant French. Nevertheless, the whole mass was driven staggering backwards, and defeat in this part of the field seemed assured. Bagration attacked the advancing enemy in flank. But he was in too small force, and met with such resistance that he gave up hope of saving Schveikovski, and began to fall back to save himself from being completely isolated. All seemed lost. Rosenberg himself galloped up to Suvorof, who was lying on a great stone in shirt, breeches, and boots. "Try and pick up this stone," said the Field-Marshal. "You cannot! No more can you make Russians retreat!" He told Rosenberg not to withdraw a single step, and sent an order to Melas to push forward on the left. At this moment Bagration rode up to declare that his men were worn out, half were killed or wounded, the muskets were foul, the enemy were still coming on in strength. "That's bad, Count Peter," said Suvorof. "Horse!" He leapt into the saddle and galloped up to Schveikovski's reeling battalions. Throwing himself into their midst he cried, "Draw them on! Draw them on! Smartly! Smartly!" Then, as the men came together in better order fifty paces to the rear, "Halt!" Covered by a sudden

outburst of artillery fire at point-blank range, the retiring troops turned, and, led by Suvorof himself, once more advanced. At the same moment Tchubarof's long-expected battalions hurried up, and the united forces drove the French back across the Trebbia.<sup>1</sup> The right was now safe.

The struggle in the centre had in the meantime never been doubtful. Montrichard attacked Förster shortly after midday, when the Russian right wing was already in difficulties, but in a very brief space he suffered a complete defeat. Melas, jealously keeping Fröhlich on the left, had spared ten squadrons of Dragoons under Lichtenstein for the support of Förster. Lichtenstein, not waiting for the French to be checked by artillery or musketry, attacked them on their right flank, while Förster charged them in front. The sharpshooters were driven in, the cavalry on the flank scattered, and the whole body of infantry chased in panic under the protection of their artillery on the right bank of the Trebbia.

This fortunate use of Lichtenstein's Dragoons was the only display of real activity which Melas made during the whole battle. If he had followed it by the despatch of all Fröhlich's infantry to the right or centre, the French would almost have certainly been driven from the field. But, as if exhausted by this effort, Melas relapsed again into pedantry, and at the very crisis of the action summoned a council of war. While Suvorof was at last driving the French left before him, and their centre was huddling in disgraceful panic on the far side of the river bed, this council solemnly decided to act on the defensive. What would have come of this decision, if the French had also remained passive, it is difficult to say. But the French had not

<sup>1</sup> Starkof, 131; Gryazef. I assume that the "fresh infantry" who came up at the critical moment were Tchubarof's. Clausewitz says somewhere that they were sent by Förster. This seems very unlikely, as Förster himself was hotly engaged at the same time as Schweikovski. It was, of course, the proper moment for Fröhlich to intervene.

been trained in Vienna, and they quickly put an end to the inglorious repose of Melas. He found himself attacked by Salme to the south of the high road, while Ollivier, with his entire division, turned his left. The French were soon in the streets of San Niccolo and captured two guns.

The situation was saved by Lichtenstein. This gallant officer had four horses killed under him during the day, and he behaved with as much discretion as bravery.<sup>1</sup> Calling his Dragoons from the pursuit of Montrichard, he launched them against Ollivier, and drove him in his turn across the river bed. The Austrian infantry recovered, pressed on against their opponents, and compelled Salme to join Ollivier under the shelter of his artillery. This advance was at last checked by the guns. But an attempt to renew the French attack was similarly frustrated, and no substantial move was made by either side. The situation here, as on the right and in the centre, was stalemate.

On the Austrian left the French advance had reached its furthest point. Watrin had penetrated as far as Calendasco. But just as Schveikovski's retreat had compelled Bagration to come in, so Watrin was withdrawn by that of Ollivier and Salme. He was in danger of being completely cut off, and beat a hasty retreat. Only the lethargy of the Austrians saved him from very heavy losses.

It was now six o'clock, and the general exhaustion of the troops made further fighting impossible, though the artillery remained for some time active on either side. At nightfall the two armies lay in their bivouacs along the banks of the river, their outposts only 30 yards apart. Suvorof, who had spent most of the day in the saddle, congratulated his generals on their "third victory," and declared that on the morrow they would give Macdonald his fourth lesson. The time for the attack was fixed at five o'clock. But, in

<sup>1</sup> Report of Melas ; Fuchs, ii. 417.

fact, the outlook was anything but cheerful. Moreau was already at Voghera, and his patrols reached as far as Casteggio. Suvorof probably knew of this on the evening of the 19th, and he had to choose between three courses. The first was to march against Moreau, leaving a strong rearguard in front of Macdonald; the second, to cross the Po at Parpanese and take up a defensive position on the left bank; the third, to make all safe by a decisive overthrow of Macdonald. He might have chosen the first, but in fact he chose the last. Moreau behind him was no worse than Macdonald behind him. In case of failure there was still the bridge across the Po, and if he succeeded, Moreau himself would be between two fires.

The problem was settled by the retreat of Macdonald. At nine o'clock in the evening of the 19th the French Commander summoned a council of war. His losses had been very heavy; some infantry battalions had ceased to exist as military units, the cavalry had been reduced by almost half, and the artillery had very little ammunition left. There was no news of Moreau, while detachments of Austrians from Mantua had already appeared at Modena, Reggio, and Parma, and on the northern bank of the Po opposite Piacenza. The spirit of the troops, many of whom were Italian levies, was bad, and there was no sign of any failure of resolution on the other side. On the whole, it seemed wiser to save the remainder of the army by a retreat, than to risk a complete disaster in another attempt at victory. At midnight the order was given to retire, and at six o'clock in the morning of the 21st the last units of Victor's division marched sullenly away, leaving the field of battle to the Allies.<sup>1</sup> It had been hard pounding, and the Russians and Austrians had pounded longest.

Before dawn Suvorof was preparing to ride among his troops and rouse them to the attack. On receiving

<sup>1</sup> Rousset, 97, 98, 99.

the news of the French retreat, he ordered the whole force to follow in pursuit, Melas along the high road, and Rosenberg through San Giorgio. The Austrians displayed their usual indecision. Melas contented himself with occupying Piacenza, and Ott, going on in a leisurely fashion with some squadrons of cavalry, captured about 200 men of the French rearguard. The Russian column was more energetic. The advance guard, composed of Tchubarof's comparatively fresh men, drove Victor beyond the Nura, and a pitched battle on a small scale was fought by Rosenberg at San Giorgio. The 17th demi-brigade was compelled to lay down its arms, and 3 flags, 4 guns, 1029 prisoners, and the baggage and papers of Victor himself remained in the hands of the pursuers. Victor's troops were now thoroughly demoralised, many took to the hills in small parties, and the artillery was dragged away by the horses of one of the other Divisions.<sup>1</sup> Other fighting took place at different points, and on the 25th June an incautious detachment of Ott's Division was captured with two guns at Sassuolo. But the affair at San Giorgio ended the operations against the main army of Macdonald. On the 16th June a body of 3000 Ligurian troops under La Poype, forming a connecting link between the two French armies, had crossed the Apennines to Bobbio, and, venturing too near the main body of the Allies, was heavily defeated by Vyeletski, with a single battalion of Austrian infantry, 50 Dragoons, and 20 Cossacks. Suvorof was never again disturbed from the direction of Tuscany.

So ended the first attempt of the French to regain Lombardy. Macdonald's losses amounted to about 17,000, or half his entire force. All his wounded in the hospitals of Piacenza fell into the hands of Melas, to the number of 7500, and the total number of prisoners taken by the Allies was 12,000. A large quantity of baggage, 7 guns, and 8 flags were the other trophies of

<sup>1</sup> Rousset, 100.



the day. Especially tragic was the fate of Dombrovski's Poles. These exiles, who had left their country rather than accept passports from Suvorof, fought at all stages of the action with desperate bravery. Their losses were frightful, and at the end of the battle, out of 2000 men, barely 300 remained under arms. The Russian losses were returned at 680 killed, 2088 wounded; the Austrian at 254 killed, 1903 wounded, and 500 missing. Suvorof, as usual, probably underestimated his own losses, and the proportion of killed to wounded in the Austrian figures is strangely low. Nevertheless, the total losses of the Allies cannot have exceeded 6000 men.<sup>1</sup>

While the battles had been raging across the bed of the Trebbia, Moreau had crossed the Apennines and fallen upon Bellegarde. On the 16th the Austrian outposts were driven from the hills, and on the 17th the French were already in the plain at Novi and Pozzolo Formigaro. They were too late. Macdonald was engaged and beaten long before Moreau could reach him. But the presence of 14,500 men so near to Alessandria was a formidable menace. Bellegarde had about as many men under his command. But 2000 were blockading the citadel at Alessandria, 2000 more were at Tortona, and Vukassovitch and Seckendorf, with 6500, were far away towards Nice and Acqui. Alkaini, in accordance with Suvorof's plan, abandoned the blockade of Tortona and fell back towards Alessandria, and Bellegarde himself sent to recall Vukassovitch and Seckendorf. With 4200 men of La Marcelle's brigade and the troops of Alkaini he determined to meet Moreau. His proper course was to fall back behind the Bormida. But he came gallantly, if wrongly, to the conclusion that he must protect Suvorof's rear at all costs by an attack. A stubborn

<sup>1</sup> My chief authority for this account of the battle of the Trebbia is Milyutin. For the part played by the Polish contingent, see also Chodzko, *Histoire des légions polonaises*, etc. ii. 168 et seq.

fight therefore began on the 20th between San Giuliano and Cassina Grossa. So well did Bellegarde handle his men that by sunset the French were in full retreat. But only a part of Moreau's whole force had been employed up to this point, and the arrival of fresh troops turned the defeat into a victory. Bellegarde's exhausted Austrians were cut in two, and the remains of La Marcelle's brigade were actually driven towards the hills, and returned the next day with great difficulty to Alessandria. The Austrian loss was heavy; 850 killed and wounded, 1294 prisoners, and 5 guns were a heavy price to pay for such an object. Moreau was of course unable to advance further, and as soon as Suvorof began his return to Alessandria he was compelled to fall back to the mountains.<sup>1</sup>

By seven o'clock in the evening of the 27th Suvorof and his army had arrived at San Giuliano. Moreau was already out of reach in the mountains, and the army again went into camp near Alessandria. For some weeks it remained inactive. The sieges of the citadels at Turin and Alessandria and the fortress of Mantua were the only operations of importance between the victory of the Trebbia and the end of July. Work began at Turin on the 8th June, and the garrison surrendered on the 20th. Alessandria was taken on the 22nd July. In the beginning of July the second Russian corps under Rehbinder arrived in the plain, and was stationed at Piacenza. Its siege train was sent on to Mantua, and that place capitulated on the last day of the month.

<sup>1</sup> Mil. ii. 288.

## CHAPTER X

### THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN, SECOND STAGE

Correspondence and complaints—The French cross the Apennines again—Battle of Novi—International fame—A dinner party—Anecdotes—Plan of a Swiss campaign—Its vices and dangers.

DURING this period of inactivity at Alessandria, the correspondence of Suvorof, with Moreau keeping an unbeaten army on the other side of the Apennines, was very feverish. Letters from Vienna provoked a torrent of protests and complaints. On the 21st June the Austrian Emperor sent him a long rescript, showing great anxiety about a French invasion of Piedmont, and referring, with singular want of tact, to the "good-luck" which had so often helped Suvorof in war. The rescript continued :

I beg you earnestly, dear Field-Marshal, always to carry out my former instructions ; that is, abstain altogether from all distant and uncertain undertakings, corresponding neither with the present general situation of affairs, nor with the intentions of myself and my sincere Ally, the Russian Emperor . . . and especially not to lose sight of the promise given by you before your departure from Vienna, that to every important proposal or proceeding which should occur to you as suitable to the circumstances of the moment, you would previously draw my attention.<sup>1</sup>

Suvorof's answer to this was a detailed description of Macdonald's defeat on the Trebbia. But there

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, ii. 458.

followed reiterated orders to defend Piedmont and Lombardy, and an express prohibition of any operations in the direction of Rome or Naples until the siege of Mantua was successfully concluded.<sup>1</sup> He was actually meditating a descent on the Genoese Riviera with 60,000 men, and for the protection of his rear again asked permission to equip Italian troops for the defence of their own country.<sup>2</sup> This met with the usual prohibition, and the Emperor went on to express his grave displeasure at hearing a rumour that the King of Sardinia proposed to visit his late kingdom of Piedmont, now so happily recovered from the enemy. Suworof was not on any account to let the King come near the theatre of war.<sup>3</sup> This blind selfishness injured Austria in more ways than one. It limited the number of troops available for aggressive action, it alienated public opinion in Piedmont, and it deprived Austria of the assistance of a patriotic army when Suworof had gone, and the French again descended upon Italy. All these checks and interferences drove Suworof into a fury, and, coupled with proposals to keep Rehbinder's Russian army in Switzerland to help the Archduke Charles, made him at last ask for his recall. Some of his letters are almost incoherent.

To Count Theodor Rostoptchin he wrote after the Trebbia:

The Russian God is great—The French are sighing, the Imperialists smile—here things go victoriously, but with difficulty—Our best is impossible; the Imperialists are slow at getting into line, the French hot; they're warm, beaten many of them, difficult to get together—and in England there are many gay folk and my portrait out on holidays, and Simeon Romanovitch praises me—but my stockings have fallen

<sup>1</sup> Mil.; Fuchs.

<sup>2</sup> Fuchs, ii. 472, 482.

<sup>3</sup> Fuchs, ii. 663. The King had even asked leave to serve under Suworof.

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down. . . . It would have been better without tactics and practices . . . politics, criticism, Thugut, the Directory, London, Potsdam—God protect us! and you and your wife.<sup>1</sup>

This was written soon after the Trebbia. On the 1st July he wrote to Razumovski:

Such mean deceits, contrived with a thousand clerkish intrigues against me as a foreigner, compel me not to endure them for an hour, and I must abandon the service if an opportunity should suddenly present itself. You are my only means of doing that. I shall be content to pass the remainder of my days, even with little means, as a country gentleman. . . . I can scarcely force myself to write these lines, I'm really so weak. . . . For God's sake, lead me out of Purgatory. . . . I should be ashamed if I didn't clear the rest of Italy of the French in this campaign. After that the French theatre wouldn't be difficult; we should find a great part of the people there sympathetic.

(1) To clear Italy of the French, give me full freedom of decision; (2) don't let the War Council and its vile projectors interfere with me; (3) I am ready, from Switzerland into either Germany or France; otherwise there's no work for me here. Home, home, home; tell Vienna that's all my plan.<sup>2</sup>

To the Tsar himself he wrote on the 6th July:

The cowardice of the War Council, jealous of me as a foreigner, the intrigues of double-faced sectional commanders in direct communication with the Council, which has hitherto controlled all the operations; my impotence to carry them out before sending a dispatch a thousand versts, compel me most humbly to request Your Imperial Highness to recall me unless things here change. I wish to lay my bones in my own land, and pray God for my Sovereign.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Voronts. Arkhiv*, xxiv. 88. Simeon Romanovitch is Prince Vorontsov, the Ambassador in London. The allusion to his stockings is a hint at Suvorof's disappointment at not receiving the Garter. He was not aware that there was no damned nonsense about merit in it.

<sup>2</sup> *Voronts. Arkh.* xxiv. 325.

<sup>3</sup> Fuchs, ii. 472.

On the same day he broke out again to Razumovski :

" Luck ! " says the Roman Emperor. . . . Manager Thugut knows plumb-line K[arl]. . . . Enough pretences. " You want soldiers ! What would you have done with them if you had been beaten ? " The Minister didn't know that to follow up a victory more soldiers are wanted. From innocent me they're taking away my ewe lamb, Rehbinden.

Archduke Charles, exalted person, he doesn't even give me what he's ordered to. The Cabinet wants to emphasize that the enthusiasm of Lombardy is a hallucination of mine, susceptible foreigner—rather, so as not to disgrace its rules before Europe, and prove that I ought to be only a sentry at the gates of the folks at Vienna.

The era of the Tidone and the Trebbia flies to its end—what will become of me ? . . . They have drowned Zenith and Nadir. Very wisely—I shall be Cincinnatus. . . . My last victories have torn from my hands 5000. The knowalls have wasted more than 10,000 of my men. The common good counsels you to replace them, not simply stupidly tear Rehbinden from me. . . . How soon may he be away from me, and I from here ! In the uttermost weakness of spirit and body—whenever God wills . . . I shall hasten to my plough.

Does the Cabinet know that a complete siege without the cover of an observation corps can't go on ? It surely doesn't ; according to its custom of being beaten in entrenchments. . . . More honest and more amiable to fight the French than me and the common good.

I advise you, honoured friend, if it happens to your Excellency to have anything to do with the troops, to be good enough to communicate the matter to me, their Commander, for my consideration. Vienna can never be as learned as I am in military operations. Do not set up more War Councils : even one will destroy my faith and faithfulness. Forgive my frankness.<sup>1</sup>

Again to Razumovski on the 8th July :

Fortune has a bald occiput, and a few dangling locks on her forehead. She travels like lightning—fail to

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, ii. 472.

catch her locks—never again will she return. Is not one campaign better than ten? Or, is it not better to have the aim of directing one's march eventually on Paris, than cleverly bar the way to one's own gates?

On the same day to Count Pavel Tolstoy:

Archduke Charles, in three or four general engagements and victories, has inflicted on the enemy a loss of five or six thousand. He could have doubled, trebled it. Bayonets! Here with me the Germans hit hard; there it's altogether otherwise. . . . Why did the Archduke Charles not march after his victory on Berne, attack Masséna again? The French are making levies, collecting a new army to the cry of "Vengeance."<sup>1</sup>

To Razumovski again on the 12th July:

I am having a real attack of fever, though on my legs. . . . I write unhappily, and would that I could write it for the last time! . . . Day and night work—carping, monstrous correspondence with the pat-talkers, ceaseless dissatisfaction with the intrigues of the War Council. . . . Would that I had full power to take advantage of circumstances, and no one would interfere, especially who have not served in war, Projectors. To—and this one—and those—take away their pens, paper, and factiousness. . . . The wily Thugut, by nature an honest patriot, but carried away by projectors of military matters, for want of true leaders, and for excess of mercenaries or parasites. Their service is for titles, ambition or egoism, hurtful to their country. I will say, they are brave; I have tried them, and I shall leave an army more victorious than that of Eugen. But without me they won't beat the others. Mollycoddles and pat-talkers.<sup>2</sup>

This inflamed condition lasted till the end of the month. On the 31st, hearing of the capitulation of Mantua, he wrote in great glee to Melas:

The fall of this fortress strengthens our army, and makes it impossible to postpone any further our pro-

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, ii. 472.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 505.

jected aggressive movement. . . . I urge your Excellency by your attachment to his Most Gracious Majesty our Sovereign and your devotion to the common good, to use all your authority and all your strength, so that the preparations necessary for active measures in the Riviera may be completely finished in the course of ten days. Speed is now of the greatest value—delay is a sin, unforgivable for its harmful consequences.<sup>1</sup>

At this critical moment he was deprived of the services of Chasteler, and wrote with much feeling to Razumovski on the 7th August :

My dear firebrand, but worthy and efficient Chasteler. . . . Under the walls of Alessandria, out of sheer wilfulness, he was wounded in a trench ; in his place—not Zach-Haft, but only Zach : good-natured, quiet, learned ; but a true projecting mollycoddle—and I'm in combustion—God grant health to Chasteler.<sup>2</sup>

But with or without his Chief of the Staff, he was going on. He had already issued a proclamation to the Genoese, announcing his arrival “ to set them free from humiliation and the savage yoke of France.”<sup>3</sup> To Kray he sent on the 30th, bidding him come from Mantua with every man who could be brought away, and allowing him eight days for the march of 115 miles.<sup>4</sup> The Tsar had made him Prince of Italy after the fall of Mantua, but this new title pleased him less than the prospect of another battle. Practically the whole of Italy was now in the hands of the Allies. The Genoese Riviera, the citadel of Tortona, and the forts of Coni, Gavi, and Serravalle were all that remained in French hands in the north ; and in central Italy they had lost everything except Rome, Civita Vecchia, Ancona, and the citadel of Perugia. On the northern frontier they had been pushed back as far as Brigue by Victor Rohan and the Great St. Bernard by Haddik. On the western

<sup>1</sup> Mil. ii. 406 ; Fuchs, ii. 638.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. ii. 606.

<sup>3</sup> Fuchs, ii. 613.

<sup>4</sup> Kray left on the 3rd August and reached Alessandria on the 10th.



they had withdrawn into Savoy and the Dauphiné.<sup>1</sup> In all, Suvorof had 108,000 men at his disposal. In the neighbourhood of Alessandria he had his main striking force of about 45,000; Keim, with 14,000, watched the passes from the west, and 11,000 protected him on the side of Switzerland. When Kray had left 5000 men in Mantua, he was able to bring to Suvorof's assistance 19,000 men, thus bringing the main body up to about 64,000.<sup>2</sup> His plans had been changed several times in detail, but were finally settled on the 30th July.<sup>3</sup> He had been busy collecting mules for the transport across the mountains, and he persuaded Nelson, then in the midst of his shameful co-operation with the Neapolitan Bourbons, to detach some vessels to cut the French communications with Genoa.<sup>4</sup> He directed General Klenau, simultaneously with his own invasion from the north, to enter the Riviera with a mixed force from the side of Tuscany. On the 2nd August he was in motion. He found the enemy closer than he expected.

A few days were required to reduce the fort of Serravalle, and even before the 7th August, on which it capitulated, news had come in of the strengthening of the French outposts in the Apennines, and of their increasing aggressiveness. On the 10th August a detachment actually succeeded in reaching Novi, where Suvorof had fixed his headquarters. The full significance of this was not at first perceived, and on the 11th the Field-Marshal issued his orders for an advance upon Genoa in four columns, in accordance with the agreed plan. But within twenty-four hours he found that he had been forestalled. Instead of attacking he was once more to be attacked.

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iii. 7, 269.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Three plans are set out in Fuchs, ii. 515, 585, and 685. Milyutin found the final plan in the *Moscow Archives* (Mil. iii. 283).

<sup>4</sup> He also wrote to St. Vincent and the Russian Admiral Ushakof (Mil. iii. 273).

While the Allies were waiting in northern Italy, the French to the south had not been idle. The fortunes of the Republic at home and abroad were at their lowest. The rising in the Vendée attained alarming proportions. The departments nearest the frontiers were stripped bare to furnish supplies for the armies in the field. Those armies themselves were reduced in some places almost to destitution, and the levying of 100,000 conscripts had barely filled the places of the sick and half-starved men who staggered home along the roads from Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. The army of Italy was in specially bad case. The whole cavalry was dismounted, because there was no forage for the horses, and the troops themselves were in want of every necessary of life. Money, clothes, boots, waggons, and even cartridges were deficient, and some demi-brigades and regiments were reduced to single battalions or even a few companies.<sup>1</sup> With this army of ragamuffins Joubert was now crossing the Apennines, and it would be unfair to Suvorof not to admit that the enemy whom he was to encounter was inferior to him, not only in numbers, but also in every kind of equipment. The French attack was largely inspired by political motives. The new Directory, set up on the 18th June, was anxious to secure itself by a success in the field, and a new loan, a new conscription, and a new victory had been projected for that purpose. The Directory, unfortunately for itself, fixed upon Suvorof as the person whose spoils were to grace its triumph. Two new armies, "of the Rhine" and "of the Alps," were to be collected: the army of Switzerland was to be increased to 70,000 men, and that of Italy to 70,000. The command of the last was entrusted to Joubert, and Moreau, enjoying the empty title of Commander-in-Chief of the paper army of the Rhine, remained, at his own request, as Joubert's assistant. After bearing all the burden of the fatigues, anxieties, and disappointments of the

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires du Maréchal de St. Cyr*, i. 219, 220.

last four months, he was supplanted by a younger man. Joubert, only thirty years of age, was described by Napoleon as "a grenadier in courage and a great general in capacity for war." His army was in fact not more than 45,000 strong, its quality was bad, and his advance was a proof of his courage rather than his skill. Moreau was for the second time to save the ruins of an army from the results of another's blundering.

The actual enterprise against Suvorof was undertaken by only 35,000 men, and these moved by dangerously separated roads. St. Cyr's right wing was split into three columns: the centre, under Laboisière, 3500 strong; the right, comprising the divisions of Watrin and Dombrovski, of 6600 men in all; and the left, consisting of Colli's brigade, of 3800 men. Perignan, with the left wing, advanced in two columns. Joubert himself was with Perignan. On the 12th Watrin had already come into contact with the Austrians in Serravalle, while Joubert himself was still a day's march from his nearest adversary.

The situation of the French, had it been known earlier to Suvorof, was now most perilous, and a lightning stroke upon St. Cyr might have been as fatal as his march upon Macdonald at the Trebbia. But when Watrin descended in force upon General Dalheim at Arcuata, and drove him back through Serravalle, it was still not believed that the whole French army was on the march. In spite of his abundant cavalry, before Novi as before the Trebbia, Suvorof was very insufficiently aware of his enemy's movements. It was decided that this attack on Dalheim was merely an attempt to relieve Tortona. Nevertheless, Bellegarde was sent to make a reconnaissance in the valley of the Bormida, and he sent back at once the information that another hostile column was approaching Acqui. Suvorof immediately called in his scattered troops. In the open country he hoped to use his overwhelming superiority of force with greater effect

than in the upper valleys, and he therefore refrained from striking before the French columns emerged from the mountains.

On the 13th he fixed his headquarters at Pozzolo Formigaro, 3 miles north of Novi. He ordered Bagration to take up a position to the south of the town, sent to his support six Russian battalions from Derfelden's force, under the command of Miloradovitch, and told Kray to come up from Alessandria on the right wing, and attack the enemy's left as soon as it came out of the mountain valley. At dawn on the 14th Bagration found the enemy approaching in great force, and fell back to Pozzolo Formigaro. St. Cyr took possession of the town of Novi, Laboissière occupying the town and the hills behind it, Watrin moving further into the plain upon his right, and Dombrovski remaining about Serravalle.

In the meantime Joubert was coming up from the west, and if Kray had carried out his original orders, a general action would no doubt have been begun, and the French would have had to fight with a dangerous gap between their left and right wings. But on Kray's urgent representation that his men were too tired to fight, Suvorof consented to his remaining inactive. Joubert was thus enabled, undisturbed, to effect a junction with the troops at Novi. The whole of the 15th was allowed to pass without any movement in strength.<sup>1</sup> The French commander, on the other hand, spent the day and the following night in great perplexity. His first view of the plain satisfied him that the worst of the rumours which had come over the Apennines were true, that Mantua had indeed fallen, and that before him was collected the flower of the Allied armies, in numbers almost twice his own. A council of war did nothing to resolve his doubts, and his final decision to

<sup>1</sup> Suvorof rode along the line to examine the French position. In his shirt and breeches he was recognised, skirmishers fired at him, and cavalry threatened to capture him (St. Cyr, i. 236 ; Mil. iii. 41, 303).

fight was that of the grenadier rather than the general. The movements of the troops reflected the confusion of their leader. Even at dawn on the 16th the French had not taken up positions as for a battle, and a large part of the left wing was still in motion towards the place assigned to it, when the Austrians were already ascending the heights.

The French position had one great virtue and one great defect. Stretching along the hills between the Scrivia and the Orba, it overlooked the plain, in which lay the army of Suvorof. Everywhere a steep descent gave the French an immense advantage. Their artillery and infantry could fire with more effect, and the Allies, besides being compelled to attack uphill, would have hardly any chance at all of using their cavalry. In addition to this general superiority of position, the French had the walled town of Novi, not isolated in the plain in front of their line, like Hougoumont in front of the British line at Waterloo, but nestling close under the hill, and jutting out like a great bastion at the junction of their centre and right. On the other hand, the position, admirably adapted for defence, was dangerously ill supplied with means of retreat. Behind the whole French line, and roughly parallel with it, ran a number of streams, flowing through narrow, steep, and deep ravines into the Lemma, which in its turn flowed into the Orba. Every movement to the rear must therefore be determined by the course of these streams. The only line of retreat of the left wing would be through the village of Pasturano, across the torrent of the Riasco, and then in a south-easterly direction, parallel to the course of the Lemma. Unless the withdrawal were made in good order and without much pressure from the enemy, the left wing must inevitably come into collision with the centre, which must also pass through Pasturano. The right wing could escape by another road, though even that passed by Serravalle and ran for some distance within gunshot of the Austrian garrison.

The general who posted his troops in the face of a superior enemy, with badly broken ground in his rear and only one road for the retreat of two-thirds of his whole army, was taking a frightful risk. In the end it was only the right wing of Joubert which escaped in military order.

After the whole of the 15th had passed without any serious move on either side, Suvorof resolved to attack early on the 16th. His plan was simple, almost crude. He had about 35,000 men within striking distance: 25,000 Austrians under Kray, and 10,000 Russians under Bagration and Miloradovitch. The right wing, under Kray, was to attack the French left and drive it through Pasturano towards the Scrivia. So confident was the Field-Marshal of success, that he gave orders to Melas not to attack the French right on the position behind Novi, but to advance along the Scrivia and capture or drive into the mountains the enemy column which he supposed to be advancing down that valley. This column, he assumed, would be making for Tortona, and it would be cut off by the triumphant advance of Kray to the banks of the Scrivia.<sup>1</sup> The plan was based on incorrect information about the intentions of the enemy and the disposition of their troops, and it had in consequence a vital defect. Assuming that only part of the French was on the hills, and that at least half their army was advancing down the Scrivia, it provided only for Kray's attack on their left, without any co-operation from the rest of the allied line. About 30,000 Russians and Austrians, including the bulk of Derfelden's division and all the troops of Rosenberg and Melas, remained inactive near Rivalta. Unless the enemy were extraordinarily incompetent, such a partial attack could hardly succeed.

As a matter of fact, the French were extraordinarily incompetent, and the plan came nearer to success than it deserved. Bellegarde moved before sunrise against the extreme left of the enemy, and Ott simultaneously

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, iii. 13 ; Mil. iii. 310.

attacked them nearer to their centre, while Seckendorf with three battalions and three squadrons of cavalry passed round the extreme point of the ridge and pressed up the gorge of the Riasco on to Pasturano itself. Incredible as it seems, the French left wing was not yet in order of battle. Nor was the right. Watrin was at this moment still marching from the Scrivia, to take up his position to the east of Novi in contact with Laboissière. But here no danger threatened, whereas on the left an attack was actually being made. One division, that of Lemoine, faced Bellegarde, and sufficient troops were in line against Ott. But between Lemoine and the Riasco there was a wide gap, which Grouchy was about to occupy with his division. The infantry reserve of Clausel and Partounaux was still in column of march behind Pasturano, when the Austrians were already closing with the troops on the ridge. The situation was desperate, and Joubert himself, rushing forward to steady his line, was killed by an Austrian skirmisher. The cavalry reserve of Richepanse threw themselves between Bellegarde and Grouchy, but as the Austrian infantry advanced with magnificent steadiness up the slope in front and Seckendorf opened fire upon the French in flank and rear, they were driven back into Pasturano. Ott was as successful as Bellegarde, and his right wing, pushing hard against Lemoine, obtained a foothold on the crest. A vigorous attack along the whole line might have converted this local success into a complete victory, but Suvorof, still believing that Kray was strong enough to beat the whole French army on the hills behind Novi, made no move. In the meantime Moreau had resumed command of the French, and behaved as steadily in this new emergency as on the Adda. Urging the troops of Grouchy and Lemoine to stand fast, he summoned help from St. Cyr, who still remained undisturbed behind Novi. St. Cyr promptly despatched Colli's brigade to assist Lemoine, and Clausel at last coming up behind Grouchy, with the

aid of Richepanse the Austrians were driven down into the plain, retiring in good order and firing steadily as they went. Seckendorf fell back in conformity with the rest.

All the advantage of surprise was now lost. It was clear to Kray himself that he could not carry out Suworof's plan without aid, and even while the struggle was still in doubt he had sent a message to Bagration urging him to attack St. Cyr. But Bagration refused to move, on the ground that he had no orders from Suworof. The Field-Marshal was in an even stranger state than Bagration. Shut in his room at Pozzolo Formigaro, he refused admission to every one.<sup>1</sup> It was after 7 o'clock, when Kray had already been completely repulsed, before he emerged, and rode out to Bagration. He immediately ordered an attack upon Novi by Bagration, with Miloradovitch in support, and directed Kray to renew his assault.

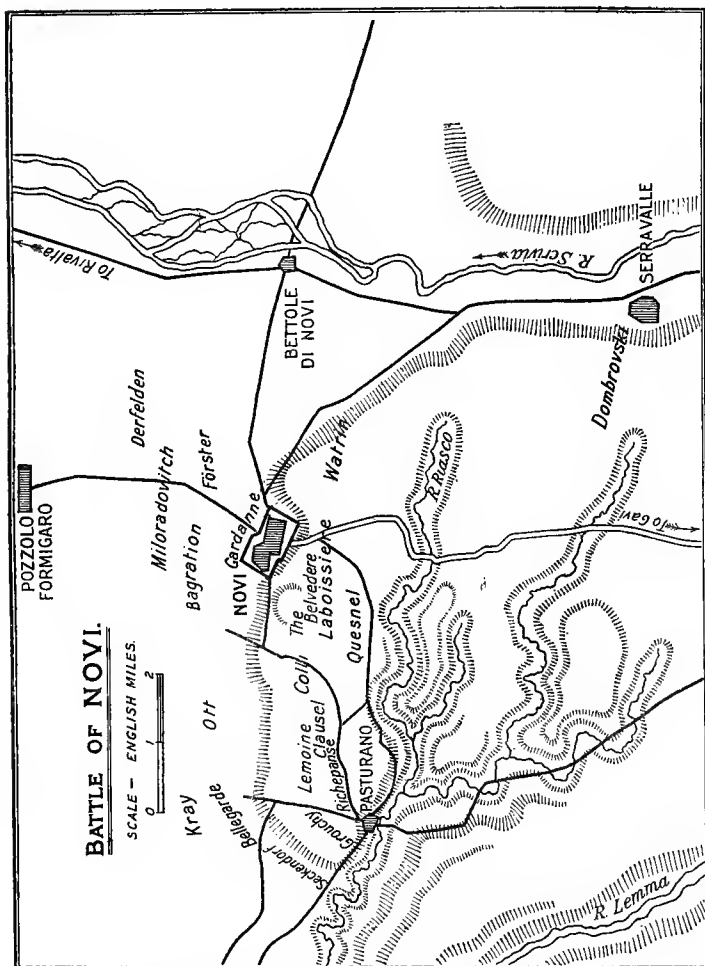
It was now too late. The French were in full possession of the ridge, and the second attack was no more successful than the first. Bagration was met by a fierce fire from the town wall, which was manned by Gardane's brigade, and, moving steadily round the town to the right under this galling musketry, he encountered Quesnel's brigade on the ridge. Quesnel was supported by a reserve of four battalions and six squadrons under Guérin, and the position was the strongest part of the whole of the French line. The behaviour of the Russian troops was beyond praise. Fired upon in front and in flank, they moved as if on parade.<sup>2</sup> But the utmost gallantry could not overcome the natural difficulties of the ground and the determination of the enemy. A French battery on the hill called the Belvedere, immediately in front of the Russians, was especially damaging, and their own artillery, firing upwards from the level ground, threw its shot over the heads of the

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iii. 52, 312 ; Starkof, 161.

<sup>2</sup> St. Cyr, i. 250.



defenders. Gardane even issued from the town and charged them in flank. This onset was repulsed, but



Bagration was forced to withdraw to his original position under cover of his cavalry.

While Bagration was re-forming his defeated but

still unbroken troops, Watrin moved up into his assigned position on the right of the French line. He had been ordered by St. Cyr to march from Bettole di Novi at as great a distance as possible from the enemy, so as to avoid any encounter until he was actually on the ridge and in touch with Laboissière.<sup>1</sup> But Watrin, very carelessly leaving one of his three brigades at Bettole di Novi, led the other two along the direct road to Novi itself. This brought him against the flank of Bagration in front of the town, but at the same time exposed his own flank to the Russian reserves. Suvorof promptly despatched against him a large part of the troops of Miloradovitch, under the command of Förster, and summoned Derfelden with the rest of his force from Rivalta. Förster was soon hotly engaged, and as Bagration again advanced against Laboissière, this time to the east of Novi, St. Cyr was hard pressed. Lacking the assistance of Watrin, who ought to have been in line with Laboissière, he was forced to draw from his reserves to strengthen his hold upon the ridge. But Gardane again sallied from the town and harassed Bagration, and the defenders were not in any way shaken. The Russians had no better hope of success than before, when Derfelden, deploying in perfect style to the left of Förster, bore down upon Watrin. The whole Russian left wing then advanced, Watrin was driven up on to the hill, and Gardane shut himself once more within the walls of Novi.

Meanwhile Kray's second attempt had failed. Some of Bellegarde's troops actually reached Pasturano, and Ott once more got a foothold on the hills. But the infantry of Clausel and the cavalry of Richepanse fell upon Bellegarde, Partouneaux held up the tottering ranks of Lemoine, and the Austrians again fell back. On this occasion the pursuit was pressed into the plain itself. The Austrian horse seized its opportunity, swept down upon the French infantry, in-

<sup>1</sup> St. Cyr, i. 241.

flicted heavy losses upon them, and took Partounaux himself prisoner.

By 1 o'clock in the afternoon both sides were exhausted by their exertions, and neither could claim the victory. A decision could only be obtained by the introduction of fresh troops. The French had none, except the brigade which had been left behind by Watrin at Bettole di Novi and was now in line with the rest. But Suvorof had still, in the forces of Rosenberg and Melas, a whole army of unused men, and he at last bethought himself of them. He ordered the Austrian commander to attack the French right, and Rosenberg to take the place of Melas at Rivalta. His orders met Melas on the road. The veteran had supposed, when Derfelden moved towards the battle, that it was already decided, and that the time had come for him to pursue the scattered fragments of the enemy. At 4 o'clock Suvorof ordered a general attack. By this time Melas was on the field, with the infantry brigades of Mitrovski, Laudon, and Lusignan, and the cavalry of Lichtenstein. Simultaneously with a new advance of the right and centre, Lusignan, with Lichtenstein in support, attacked Watrin in front. The fourth brigade, that of Nobili, marched up the right bank of the Scrivia and forced Dombrowski to retire from Serravalle to Gavi. Mitrovski and Laudon, moving up the left bank of the river, wheeled round to the west, and attacked Watrin in flank and rear.

This fresh attack was too much for the French. A Cisalpine legion, forming part of Watrin's division, was the first to give way. Lusignan forced himself into the gap and effected a junction with Laudon, and under their combined pressure the whole division was driven into flight. St. Cyr in vain threw the 106th demi-brigade against Lusignan. The Austrians halted, Lusignan was wounded and taken prisoner, and two guns were for a time lost. Watrin's line was for the moment restored. But he was given no chance to

recover the lost ground. Miloradovitch broke into Novi from the north, and Derfelden from the east, and Gardane's brigade, escaping with difficulty, swarmed up on to the ridge, with the Russians in hot pursuit. This settled the fate of Watrin, and a third and last attack from Kray finally drove the French left from its position.

It was now 6 o'clock. The whole French Army was in retreat, and the retreat became a rout. Watrin's division got away in good order, but Grouchy, Lemoine, and Colli were driven pell-mell into the narrow streets of Pasturano and the gorge of the Riasco. The gorge was filled with guns and waggons, through which the terrified soldiery had to struggle. To add to the confusion, a battalion of Austrian infantry and some hussars succeeded in crossing the ravine, and opened fire on the road. In a few minutes this was still further blocked with dead animals and immovable vehicles. These, with the maddened fugitives, the screaming and plunging horses, and cursing drivers and artillerymen, filling the bottom of the gorge from side to side, while the bullets rained on them from above, presented for a time an impassable barrier to those troops who held together and tried to effect a disciplined withdrawal. The sharpshooters were at length driven off by General Debel, who got together a mass of drivers, artillerymen, and infantry, and made a charge upon them. But the road remained blocked. The crowd of men in Pasturano had to get away as best it could, scrambling through the gardens and vineyards, and dispersing over the slopes of the hills. Grouchy and Perignan, with one battalion, were captured in the village, and Colli, with his entire brigade, was surrounded outside it, and forced to surrender. All the artillery and baggage in the gorge were left to the victors, and nothing of the whole army escaped in order except a portion of St. Cyr's right wing. The list of casualties was no index of the extent of the French defeat. In killed and wounded they lost 6500,

while the Allies lost 7000 ; and the French prisoners were about 4500, against 1000 taken from the Allies. But the real measure of Suvorof's victory was the complete dispersion of the mass of Moreau's army. One-third had been killed, wounded, or taken. Another third was irretrievably scattered. Only a remnant escaped as a military organisation.

The victory at Novi, shattering as it was, cannot be regarded as a good example of Suvorof's military genius. The proper use of overwhelming numbers is to overwhelm, and by bringing different parts of his army into action at different times, he to a great extent threw away his advantages. This was not a case like the Tidone, where he brought his troops up to the field with great difficulty, and sent them into action as they reached the ground. There was never any reason why he should not have attacked Joubert along the whole line simultaneously. The reasons urged on his behalf are very inadequate. The first is that he intended Kray's attack to be a mere feint, and hoped that the French would descend into the plain in pursuit of him; in which case they would be destroyed by the cavalry. This suggestion is inconsistent not only with Suvorof's whole character, but with other and equally stubborn facts. His instructions to Kray contain no hint of such an object, and actually bid him attack with all his strength. Kray carried out his orders to the letter, and, in spite of considerable losses, repeated his attack, and asked Bagration to help him. If the attack had been a mere feint, there was no need to repeat it after the first costly failure, except as part of a general attack. The second plea for the defence is that Suvorof did not know that all the enemy were before him, and kept a large force in hand to deal with the apprehended advance down the valley of the Scrivia. This is a reason, but not an excuse. That he was ignorant of the distribution and objective of the forces against him is quite true. But he kept back not only Melas, but also Rosenberg, and whatever threat might

be made against him at Tortona, it could not require 20,000 men to meet it. Nothing would have been easier than to bring Melas into action at the same time as Kray, leaving Rosenberg to cover Tortona. In that case, the main body of the French would have been beaten in three or four hours, and any force operating against Tortona would have fallen into his hands, as Sérurier fell into his hands after the passage of the Adda. Kray's attack was, in fact, entirely proper as a real, and not as a sham, attack. Apart from the sluggishness of the enemy in taking up their positions, which Suvorof had no right to expect, the condition of the ground clamoured for such an attack. But neither that nor any other flank attack ought to have been made, except as part of a concerted movement. Simultaneous blows at the centre and right would have detained all St. Cyr's men on the spot, and the left wing would never have recovered from its first confusion. Many gallant lives would thus have been saved. The only reasonable explanation of Suvorof's use of his army at Novi is that he was nearly seventy years old, and that even his abundant energy was for a few hours asleep.

The victory so sluggishly achieved was no more vigorously developed, and the leisurely pursuit of the French was ended on the 18th by a successful encounter with their rear-guard at Monte Rosso. Moreau was nevertheless in such a plight that pursuit was hardly necessary to complete his ruin, and a slight effort on the part of Suvorof would have achieved his object of driving the French entirely out of Italy. The first cause of his inaction was his anxiety about supplies. The preparations begun before Novi were still incomplete, the army had with it bread for no more than two days, and nothing would be found on the southern slopes of the mountains.<sup>1</sup> On the 17th the main body was therefore halted on the northern side of the range, and only scouts were sent forward.<sup>2</sup> But this halt was meant to

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iii. 77, 332.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iii. 334 ; Fuchs, iii. 21.

be temporary. In the meantime Klenau was going on with his invasion of the Riviera from Tuscany, with an army composed of Austrians from Mantua, Italian levies, and some Cossacks. At Lerici he was helped by some sailors sent by Captain Martin, of the English ship *Northumberland*.<sup>1</sup> His whole force amounted to about 9000 men. He was actually preparing for an advance from Santa Marta upon Genoa itself, when, on the 17th August, he received direct orders from the War Council at Vienna to abandon his plan, return to Tuscany, and do nothing until he received further instructions. At the same time the Council ordered Melas to collect 9000 men in Tuscany, to restore order and disarm the native irregulars. This army was to be under the command of Fröhlich, who was summoned to Vienna to receive his orders in person.

Suvorof heard of this fresh outrage on the part of the Council in a letter from Melas, who wrote on the 16th to inform him that he was actually carrying out the instructions of the Council without waiting for the consent of the Field-Marshal.<sup>2</sup> Soon afterwards Suvorof received a rescript from the Emperor Francis, dated the 9th August, in answer to his own suggestion of an invasion of France itself. In this the news of Melas was confirmed. The Emperor wrote :

The time has now come to detach a part of my troops to restore order in the southern parts of Italy, especially in Tuscany and the neighbouring possessions of Rome, to put an end to the turmoil caused there by the popular rising.

And the Emperor peremptorily forbade the invasion of French territory.<sup>3</sup> On the lips of an Austrian Emperor the restoration of order was synonymous with the suppression of freedom, and Suvorof bitterly resented this diversion of military forces from the completion of

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, ii. 595, 603, 614 ; Mil. iii. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iii. 79, 337.

<sup>3</sup> Fuchs, ii. 681.

the enemy's overthrow to the furthering of the private ends of the House of Hapsburg. Colonel Zuccato, who was engaged on his behalf in raising the Tuscan levies in their own defence, immediately returned to Lombardy, "to save the honour of the Russian uniform in the eyes of the Italians."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Suvorof hoped that Klenau might be allowed to go on and capture Genoa. On the 16th he begged that the Emperor would not prevent the gathering of at least thus much of the fruits of Novi, though he agreed that a French campaign was impossible till the spring.<sup>2</sup> His private correspondence continued to express his indignation. On the 11th he had written to Count Rostoptchin :

All goes ill with me. The orders sent every minute from the War Council weaken my health, and I cannot serve here any longer. They want to regulate operations a thousand versts away ; they don't know that every minute on the spot makes them change. They make me the agent of some Diedrichstein, Turpin, or other. Here's a new arrangement of the Viennese Cabinet. . . . You will see from it whether I can be here any longer. I ask your Excellency to lay it before His Imperial Highness, as well as the suggestion that after the Genoese operation I shall ask formally for my recall, and get away from here.<sup>3</sup>

This letter was followed by a stream of others.<sup>4</sup> But the question whether the Genoese enterprise should continue was settled by events in another quarter. On the 17th Suvorof heard that the French on the Swiss frontier had begun to show signs of aggressiveness. Victor Rohan had been driven down the Simplon as far as Domodossola, and Strauch, pressed back from the St. Gothard to Airolo, had retreated to Bellinzona.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iii. 338, 342 ; Fuchs, iii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iii. 341 ; Fuchs, iii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Fuchs, iii. 20.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 158, 163, 164. Suvorof was again suffering from fever, "though still on my feet."

<sup>5</sup> Mil. iii. 344.



On the 17th itself the enemy crossed the Great and the Little St. Bernard, and came to blows with Haddik in the valley of Aosta.<sup>1</sup>

The want of men, money, and supplies in all the theatres of war had not deterred the Directory from undertaking offensive action in Switzerland as well as in Italy. If possible, the troops of Masséna were in a worse condition even than those of Moreau, and the consequent plundering had reduced the occupied districts to absolute destitution. Nevertheless, in spite of its privations, the army remained resolute, and at the urgent request of the Directory, Masséna set it in motion, confident that so long as his men could stand on their legs they would fight.<sup>2</sup> The Directory had constructed an elaborate plan for the destruction of both the Archduke Charles and Suvorof. But, in fact, Masséna's action was determined by the approach of Korsakof, with the Russian Army formerly under the command of Herman. He must strike at the Archduke before the Austrian commander was joined by Korsakof, or he must, given ordinary energy on their part, himself be expelled from Switzerland. He therefore determined to attack the Austrians at the moment when Joubert was descending the Apennines, to escape dishonour only by perishing at Novi. Masséna had 64,500 troops against 73,000, and he knew how to concentrate his strength. When the fighting began, he had at Zurich only 25,000 against the Archduke's 47,000. All the rest were first thrown against the Austrians keeping touch between the Archduke and Suvorof. The net result of the operations of the 13th, 14th, and 15th of August was that the French captured the Simplon and the St. Gothard. The Austrians had displayed all the resolution which could reasonably be required of soldiers, and the French

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iii. 357.

<sup>2</sup> Hennequin, *Zurich*, chap. iii. The Swiss contrasted the French very unfavourably with the Austrians, and Masséna's Swiss auxiliaries deserted in large numbers.

such daring and impetuosity as have seldom been seen in war. The Austrians were beaten in every encounter. Their total losses were 21 guns and little short of 10,000 men, of whom 6000 were prisoners, while the victors lost less than 2000 killed and wounded.<sup>1</sup> The news of these disastrous happenings, too late to save the French at Novi, nevertheless reached Suworof in time to make all further thought of crossing the Apennines impossible. A final blow was given to his hopes by the latest news from Klenau. On the 22nd the commandant of the French in Tortona agreed to surrender the citadel on the 11th September, if no advance were made in the meantime by the French. A few days later came the news of the complete defeat of Klenau. The latter had been overtaken by an order from Melas to send back six battalions to Tuscany, and his Cossacks to Lombardy, just when Watrin and Mulisse left Genoa to attack him. He obeyed the order of Melas, and was, in consequence, soundly beaten on the 26th at Rapello.<sup>2</sup> Suworof was now compelled to think of other things than the invasion of Genoa.

For a few weeks after the victory of Novi he remained inactive in camp at Asti, enjoying his growing fame. The Tsar was carried away by his feelings, and ordered the Guard and all other Russian troops, even in his own presence, to show the same military honours to Suworof as to His Imperial Highness's own person.<sup>3</sup> The King of Sardinia having addressed him as "our dear cousin," the Tsar welcomed Suworof into his own family, "since all Kings were related to each other." Outside Russia the name of Suworof became known as widely as that of Frederick the Great during the Seven Years' War. His portrait appeared in the window of every print-shop, and no one was deterred from selling the fashionable subject by want of acquaintance with the original.

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iii. 105, 350 ; Hennequin, vi.

<sup>2</sup> Fuchs, iii. 24, 76, 132, 169.

<sup>3</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1884), iv. 627.

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One enterprising Austrian tradesman coolly appropriated an English portrait of George Washington, and labelled it "Suwarrow." In England, where everybody was wildly excited by Suvorof's triumphs, the artists went as far astray, and he generally appeared adorned with huge moustaches, smoking a monstrous pipe, and wearing furs, gold chains, and boots which rivalled those accredited to the famous Puss. Gillray, with nothing but his imagination to guide him, drew a ferocious giant of a negroid type, with the customary moustaches, described it as etched "from the original drawing taken from life," and underneath it declared that "This extraordinary man is now in the prime of life—Six Feet Ten Inches in height—never tastes either wine or spirits; takes but one Meal a day; and every Morning plunges into an Ice Bath; his Wardrobe consists of a plain Shirt, a White Waistcoat and Breeches; short Boots and a Russian Cloak; he wears no covering on his Head, either by day or night; when tired he wraps himself up in a Blanket and sleeps in the open air: he has fought 29 pitched battles, and been in 75 engagements."<sup>1</sup> The Russian Ambassador wrote to tell Suvorof that in a Birmingham theatre he had heard a song in his praise sung after "God save the King" and "Rule Britain." It was greeted with thunderous applause, and was twice encored. A medal designer named Bolton was anxious to issue a medal, and wanted a portrait.<sup>2</sup> Ladies began to wear Suvorof hats and feathers.<sup>3</sup> Fame had nothing more to offer.

Suvorof did not abandon his liking for talking across the dinner-table. Every day he entertained a large number of guests at the midday meal, which took place at the time of a modern breakfast. At his own table, at any rate, the fare was not of a tasty kind. French

<sup>1</sup> Several of these "portraits," including the Gillray, are in the Suvorof Museum at Petrograd.

<sup>2</sup> Fuchs, iii. 258.

<sup>3</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1884), iv. 627.

*émigrés* and Austrian officers found boiled meat and kasha very inadequate, in spite of the enthusiasm with which he pressed the stuff upon them, and they generally had another meal immediately afterwards. On these occasions Suvorof talked constantly. He displayed an intimate knowledge of military history, and could describe in detail all the principal fortresses of Europe. He was particularly fond of talking of his own performances. "A man," he said, "who has accomplished great works ought to speak of them often, so as to inspire ambition and emulation in his hearers." He must have been very happy, sitting in the midst of a concourse of guests, Russian, Austrian, Italian, French, and English, every one of them in full uniform and wearing his orders, and himself the unchallenged leader of them all. He talked as a rule until he was tired, and then he lay down to rest on his straw mattress.<sup>1</sup> One of these great triumphs has been described in detail by Fuchs, who for once did his duty by posterity, and set down Suvorof as he was.

After welcoming the guests, who included Lord William Bentinck, Suvorof ordered some one to read the Lord's Prayer. At the end he said, "Who doesn't say 'Amen' won't get any vodka." Then he drank to the health of the two Emperors, and bade the guests be seated. He began at once to talk, and expressed great delight at having two "High Excellencies" at his table, in the persons of Rosenberg and Melas. He proceeded to make Melas repeat after him that Russian title, in the first syllable of which is the most difficult vowel sound in the language. Poor Melas was unable to get over the stumbling-block, and the cheerful Field-Marshal launched upon a long dissertation in German on the beauty and richness of his native tongue. Then he asked Melas if he had a Russian interpreter in his army. Receiving the answer, "No," he declared that

<sup>1</sup> "Reminiscences of the Marquis Marsillac," *Russ. Star.* (1879), ii. 399.

in future he would always write to Melas in Russian, "just as I wrote to Prince Coburg at the Ruimnik, 'Coming Suvorof.'"<sup>1</sup> All the heads of his staff nodded over those words like antiquaries over Egyptian hieroglyphics. But the victory on the Ruimnik interpreted them."

Turning upon Fuchs and Miloradovitch, who had been entertaining an Italian poet, he demanded why they were not talking to their "dear guest." They answered with one voice that they had been doing nothing else since they sat down. He then told them to request the poet, whenever he sang, to sing bass. He had himself sung once with Dyerzhavin. He invited the poet to come to church and listen to him.

At this point some rather badly cooked beef was brought to the table, and Suvorof directed his fire at Lord William. "Take a little more, Lord Bentinck! Now you, as an old acquaintance, will be able to judge of the goodness of this roast beef. I love the country," he went on, "where Duke Portland and Lord Bentinck were born. There also was born Marlborough, the friend of Prince Eugen. Yes, and there is my friend the Prince of Coburg. We make the age of Orestes and Pylades no empty fable." Then he went on to praise Lord Chatham, comparing him with Cicero, and spoke in high terms of the existing British Government. All this while he was pulling up his stockings, by way of hinting to his English guests that he was in great need of the Order of the Garter. Then, after a short pause, he began to wink his eyes, smile, grimace, and rub his face with his fingers. "This," he declared to the company, "is the best remedy against faintness." And without any warning he began to tell his adjutant a story in German, the crisis of the anecdote being a French pun. The unfortunate man understood hardly a word of any language but Russian, and escaped a disaster only by the continual repetition of his entire German vocabulary, "Ja, gut. Ja, gut."

<sup>1</sup> "Reminiscences of De la Gardie," *Russ. Star.* (1876), iii. 834.

Then the Field-Marshal turned upon the general company, and informed them that "a military man must know the languages of the peoples with whom he is at war. In Turkey I studied Turkish; in Poland, Polish; in Finland, Finnish," and in proof of this last statement he declaimed a Finnish poem, extolling its rhythm. After this he discoursed to Miloradovitch about the military virtues, and told him to work out, with the assistance of Fuchs, the distinction between *vaiillance*, *valour*, *courage*, and *bravoure*. His attention was next directed to the Italian poet, who was sitting, as Fuchs says, "holding his finger under his eye, according to the custom of the Italians," and demanded, "What are you thinking about?" The bard replied with enthusiasm, "My imagination has transported me to the tent of Agamemnon, where I sit in the council of the Greek chieftains, and see the fall of Troy and the triumph of Hellas." Suworof upon this delivered an address of considerable length, which Miloradovitch and Fuchs were bidden to translate for the benefit of the poet. "I have known Homer for a long time. It was my friend Yermil Ivanovitch Kostrof who made me intimately acquainted with him in our native language. I like Homer, but I don't like the ten-year siege of Troy. What slowness! How much misery for Greece! I don't want to be Agamemnon; I should not have quarrelled with quick-footed Achilles. I like his friend Patroclus for his quickness; where he showed himself, there the enemy was not. And Ossian, my travelling companion; he fires me; I see and hear Fingal in the mist, sitting on the high rock and saying, 'Oscar, conquer might in arms; defend the weak.' Honour and fame to the singers! They make us men! They are the creators of social good. They are the spark flung into the powder. Even now there rings in my ears the summons of his poetry; oh, the great man! The genius! The *grandissima testa*!"

As Fuchs says, "Somehow or other we were able to

quench this conflagration." But another began almost at once. Turning to Melas, he asked, "Was it long ago, the Trojan War?" A more learned man would have fallen into the pit and been denounced as a can't-teller. But Melas, being a simple soldier, answered positively, "A thousand years before Christ." "Ah, merciful God! How long ago began, not the period, but the age of our military art! How it has been mutilated in our time! Why did Würmser hide himself in Mantua?" "Surely," said Melas, "the existing circumstances compelled him." "Existing circumstances, existing circumstances! Can't-tellness, molly-coddling, methodism, equivocation!" vociferated Suvorof. This he repeated several times. Then he said to Fuchs, "My Prime Minister and High Chancellor in the war against the atheists, write this down clearly, 'They love mediocrity, they don't endure talent, because it can't bear the curb.'" Then to Melas again, "Isn't it true, papa Melas, that our war is the first in the world? It is being waged by Paul I., and in truth he is the first to fight without covetousness, to render to each his own without reward. Where are there such examples in history? Hurrah for the Russian Tsar!"

At this point Melas's adjutant, Eckhardt, slapped his forehead, trying to kill a fly. "Ah, merciful God!" cried the horrified Suvorof, "you didn't kill the fly?" "No," replied Eckhardt, "I drove it away." "Thanks; we mustn't kill the poor mites, they're only looking for food. Have you read Voltaire?" "No." "Bravo, bravo! The frivolous levity of Voltaire, the crack-brained paradoxes of Rousseau, and the atheism of Diderot have generated a hellish crop of rebelliousness. But our bayonets have just sent them flying." Here the Field-Marshal shed a few tears. Then he went on, "What a rootless tree! Let us pray to God—read Gellert, he's no sophist, no debauchee."

He next treated three of his guests in succession to a long and detailed conversation about his private

estates. After this he talked of his last ball, and regretted the absence from it of a certain Maria Mikhailovna of Borovits, who would have eclipsed all the ladies of this country. "Now," he said, "I shall dance no more till we reach Paris, and there I shall dance the 'Minuet à la Reine,' to the tune of 'Vive Louis, vive Louis, vive Louis!'"

After nearly three hours of this miscellaneous talking, the old man grew tired, and began to hang his head. His servant Proshka dug him in the back, and whispered "Time to sleep, master." He nodded. Then, after sitting for a few more minutes in meditation, he declared that "after the thunder of the guns the Muses had lulled me to sleep." He crossed himself, hopped from his chair, trotted off to another room, and threw himself down on his straw mattress.

Having sat for three hours over dinner, "all dispersed," says Fuchs, "to look for something to eat." Melas stayed behind to say to the Secretary, "Good Lord, how this man busies himself with his own pride. But what's to be done? He's the only one who has anything to be proud of. Sit still, shut your mouth, and wonder."<sup>1</sup>

One or two undated notes of Fuchs may refer to events of this period. An autograph letter from a certain Minister came to him, written in a cramped and undecipherable hand. He and the Secretary struggled with it for some time, but with little success. Then he told Fuchs to send it back with a covering note:

We return your impenetrable secret. Suvorof likes, in diplomacy and politics, clear writing and mathematical accuracy. Mystical Delphic language is alien to him. It was the ruin of Greece.<sup>2</sup>

These classical allusions were constantly on his lips and his pen. But one of them fell on stony ground. Coming across a military surgeon of very questionable skill, he bade him "cease to enrich Charon." The

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, *Misc.* 92.

<sup>2</sup> Fuchs, *Misc.* 138.



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doctor stolidly answered that he had never heard the name before. This hardy reply was too much for Suvorof. Running into another room, he shut the door, and cried out, "Don't cast pearls before swine."<sup>1</sup>

Fuchs had an eye for other things beside the ludicrous, and some of his gleanings are worth preservation as throwing light on the stronger aspects of the Field-Marshal's character. "I work in minutes, not hours."<sup>2</sup> "To do good one must make haste."<sup>3</sup> "Love your soldiers and they will love you—that's the whole secret of victory."<sup>4</sup> "Be the slave of your word, not the master of it."<sup>5</sup> These are not bad maxims, and his description of Chasteler as "my full, but badly arranged military library"<sup>6</sup> is better than mere clowning. Fuchs himself, in the pages where he describes the great dinner, is careful to point out that performances of this sort were only Suvorof's play, and that in business he was energetic and kept close to his work. That work was now largely concerned with the proposals for a campaign in Switzerland.

The first suggestion that Suvorof should enter Switzerland came from England. In May the Dutch expedition was proposed to the Tsar, and on the 13th June Lord Grenville sent the sketch of a further plan: that the Archduke Charles should march through Alsace, by way of Belfort, into France; that Suvorof should take his place and clear Switzerland; and that the Austrian Army in Northern Italy should enter Savoy and the Dauphiné. This project had the solitary merit of concentrating all the Russian forces on one spot and abolishing the difficulty of the joint operations in Italy. It was at once approved by the Tsar, and, rather unexpectedly, by Thugut. But the latter had other objects in view than a military victory. He was determined that if the English and Russians were going to

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, *Misc.* 139.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 91, 94.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 84, 93.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 110.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 111.

the Low Countries, an Austrian army should be on the spot when the time came to share the spoils. Raising no objection to the transfer of Suvorof to Switzerland, he said that the Archduke must be transferred to the Lower Rhine. This would leave not more than 25,000 men on the frontiers of Alsace, and would make an advance on Belfort impossible. The negotiations dragged on for some weeks, and on the 7th August Thugut went so far as to order the Archduke to leave Switzerland as soon as Korsakof arrived on the spot to replace him. The immediate effect of this order was to paralyse the Archduke, who could undertake nothing in a theatre which he was so soon to leave. Suvorof, in the meantime, had shown no liking for a plan which wasted time and threw Italy once more into the incompetent hands of Austria. But so long as the plan retained its original form, he was prepared to acquiesce in it. It was not until the 27th August that he received orders from the Austrian Emperor to betake himself into Switzerland, and learnt that the Archduke was to transfer himself to the Lower Rhine.

The original plan, though it involved the loss of some time in moving troops from one theatre of war to another, had some good in it. With Thugut's alterations it was incurably bad. Even the transfer of Suvorof to Switzerland would have been a sound move, if only it had not been made conditional on the withdrawal of the Archduke. Every military argument was in favour, not of such a dispersion of forces, but of a concentration against the French in Switzerland. Italy was safe, on the Lower Rhine the enemy could only muster 10,000 or 15,000 men, and there was little to encourage the Directory in what was going on in Holland. A direct attack by the Archduke upon Masséna, supported by an invasion of Switzerland from Italy by Suvorof and vigorous action by the smaller Austrian forces on the Lindt and in the Grisons, must have resulted in a complete victory. The Swiss

bastion would have been abolished, and the French frontiers opened to invasion. In the absence of some almost impossible accident, these consequences must have followed. Even the events of the middle of August had not affected the vital principles of strategy. The control of the Simplon and the St. Gothard had been lost. But it might be resumed, or Suvorof might enter Switzerland further to the east.

Nevertheless, while all the practical arguments were on the side of bold and combined aggressive action, the War Council at Vienna, enveloped in its hyper-political mist, saw nothing but its own distorted abstractions. With its usual insistence upon secondary and private affairs, it subordinated the interest of the alliance to that of the Austrian Empire. It was jealous of English and Russian success in the Low Countries, and it was jealous of English and Russian success in Italy. If any plunder was to be got in Flanders, it must be got for the House of Hapsburg, and if the French were expelled from Italy, the fruits of the work of Suvorof and Nelson must be gathered by Austrian armies. Therefore, while reason and loyalty clamoured for a united effort in Switzerland, the elaborated intellects of Vienna had worked out their plan for withdrawing the Archduke into a position where he could share in the approaching triumph in the Netherlands, and for getting Suvorof out of Italy, where he was for ever threatening to restore authority to native princes, instead of passing it over to the pro-consuls of the Austrian Empire. The War Council aimed first and last at the enlargement of Austrian territory, and its Allies were never more than its instruments. The Emperor had even the insolence to refer to "the pressing requests of the inhabitants of Belgium, who wish to see appearing in their neighbourhood part of the Austrian Army in Germany."<sup>1</sup> No one chafed more

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Thugut to Cobenzl of the 6th August ; set out in *Mil.* iii. 383, 385.

at this interference of politicians with questions of strategy than did the Archduke Charles.<sup>1</sup> The blame for the failure of the campaign, the consequent destruction of the Coalition, and the resurrection of French power in the next year must rest upon the shoulders of the statesmen of Vienna. There have always been fewer perils in the hostility of Austria than in her friendship.

Bad as the plan had now become, it was made still worse. It had been agreed that the Austrians should evacuate their positions in Switzerland only when the Russians were ready to occupy them.<sup>2</sup> But as Suvorof continued his arrangements for the consolidation of his position in Italy, the Archduke's patience became exhausted. On the 15th August, at his first interview with the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, Korsakof learned to his dismay that the Archduke was about to march his troops out of Switzerland to the last man, and that he himself was to be left, with 28,000 Russians, the French émigrés of the Prince de Condé, 6000 Bavarians, and an indefinite but certainly weak force of Swiss in English pay, to defend a line of 150 miles against enemy forces of twice his strength.<sup>3</sup> Suvorof wrote on the 30th August, not yet aware of the Archduke's intention, to beg him to wait until Coni and Tortona had fallen, and the French had been driven back into Savoy. These operations would occupy two months.<sup>4</sup> But before this date, on the 26th, the Archduke had written to inform Suvorof that he was going to carry out his part of the scheme, and on the 29th his vanguard had actually been set in motion towards Schaffhausen.<sup>5</sup> At the earnest appeal of Wickham, the British envoy at his headquarters, he consented to leave 22,000

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Wickham to Suvorof of the 9th Sept.; Mil. iii. 407; the Archduke's own *Geschichte des Feldzugs*, 1799, ii. 149; Hüffer, *Quellen*, 240.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iii. 380, 382, 384.

<sup>3</sup> Mil. iii. 161, 394; Hüffer, 240.

<sup>4</sup> Hüffer, 311, 326.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 312, 313.

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men, under Hotze, Jellacic, and Zimbschen, until Suvorof should actually arrive. But he took with him 38,000 men.<sup>1</sup> The Allies were thus deprived of all their existing superiority of strength at the critical point, in the hope of succeeding at a later date in a direction from which they were as yet threatened with no danger.

On the 3rd September Suvorof learned with horror that the Archduke had begun his march.<sup>2</sup> Waiting only for the surrender of Tortona, he began his preparations for departure.<sup>3</sup> There could be no question now of further triumphs in Italy. He must go to Switzerland to avoid a disaster. His feelings during the period were expressed in some violent private and official letters. On the 21st August he broke out to Count Stephan Vorontsof in his crypto-mythological style:

Survey the hell over which Momus reigns, and, stretching his jaw at the century's end more mightily than ever to the Alps, restores new Rome, whose foundations were near the abyss. Mighty Pluto, conquered by his great-grandchild, Astoroth, abandons his bridge-building across the Styx, and flies to dry his cloak under the roof of Mollycoddling. Most humbly I begged long ago for my recall. Now I have had fever for a week, though still on my legs. This hell has vomited the hydra. Cassano 20,000, Tidone-Trebbia 30,000, Novi 40,000; now there will be 50,000, although I have 60,000 in prisoners alone.<sup>4</sup>

On the 3rd September he wrote more coherently to Razumovski:

Thugut—that pettifogger—that owl from his dark nest, as if bound about by dreams of Skanderbeg, can he lead armies, direct circumstances that change in the twinkling of an eye? A conqueror and a commander he can never be except without his political rules. Thugut is bound hand and foot to detail.

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iii. 174, 398.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iii. 424; Fuchs, iii. 179, 183.

<sup>3</sup> Fuchs, iii. 254, 257, 282.

<sup>4</sup> Voronts. *Ark.* xxiv. 339.

This colossal Thugut, having lost by his defensiveness the Netherlands, Switzerland with the Rhine fortresses, and Italy, was only stopped by Campo Formio, where he bent his knee to Bonaparte. By the help of God alone I began the work of setting things in order, and then he with his silly system uses the Archduke to thrust me out of France. My indignation prevents me from writing more now.

So he relieved his feelings. But, as usual, though his distrust and hatred of Thugut and the War Council never vanished till the final rupture of the Coalition, the prospect of action made him more cheerful. On the 7th September he wrote to the Tsar :

Graciously forgive me, if in the bitterness of my heart I dared to ask for my recall from here to my blessed fatherland. I am now used to bearing with contempt insults directed against myself; but when, by the insolence and audacity of the Cabinet of an Ally whom you have loaded with benefits, some outrage is done to the glory and worthiness of my Sovereign and the victorious arms which he has entrusted to me—then I am forced to incline towards a life of peace. Henceforward in all places where it shall please the All Highest to direct my life, I consecrate it to the glorious service of Your Imperial Highness. . . . Now I am about to lead your brave soldiery into Switzerland, whither your Supreme Authority has pointed me the road, and there on a new field of battle I shall defeat the enemy or die with glory for my fatherland and my Sovereign.<sup>1</sup>

On the 11th the French in Tortona surrendered. On the same day the Russians left Alessandria and Rivalta for Valenza; and on the 13th, in a single column, they crossed the Po, and made for Bellinzona and the St. Gothard.

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iii. 437.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SWISS CAMPAIGN

Alternative routes—March on the St. Gothard—The Pass taken by storm—Rosenberg's flank march—The Devil's Bridge—No thoroughfare over the Mountains—Korsakof's defeat at Zurich—In the trap—Decision to fight out of it—Battles in the Muottenthal and Klönthal—Through to Glaris—Over the mountains again—Safe but not sound—Correspondence—Recall to Russia.

WHEN, on the 21st September, the Russian Army left Bellinzona, and began to climb the valley of the Ticino towards the St. Gothard, the general situation in Switzerland was not safe. Along the Limmat, from the Aar to the town of Zurich, stood Korsakof's Russians, 24,000 strong. Prince Albert of Würtemberg, with 2500 Austrians, watched the northern shore of the Lake, and Hotze, with 8000, guarded the line of the Lindt, between the Lakes of Zurich and Wallenstadt. Jellacic was at Sargans with 5000 men, Linken at Ranz with 3500, and Auffenberg at Disentis with 3000. Strauch was beyond Biasco, on the way to the St. Gothard, with 4500, Victor Rohan with 2500 in front of Arona, where the Simplon road opens on to Lake Maggiore, and Haddik, with 7500, blocked the mouth of the valley of Aosta and the Great St. Bernard. The French were strongest where the Allies were weakest. On the southern passes they had now comparatively few men, and Lecourbe had less than 12,000 men between Glaris, on the Lindt, and Airolo, on the Italian side of the St. Gothard. But between the Aar and

Zurich Masséna had 38,000 men, and opposite Hotze Soult had 11,500. The aspect of affairs in northern Switzerland had been completely reversed. The Austrians had deliberately marched away, and the French were now to teach them what to do, if they ever had such a chance again. All depended on the movements of Suvorof. If his 18,000 men could reach Zurich in time, the French superiority, in numbers and in command, would disappear. But if the French chose, they could win a victory at Zurich which would make even the arrival of Suvorof of no importance.

There were in fact two roads open to him. He might have gone by way of Chiavenna over the Splügen, or, having come to Bellinzona, might cross the Bernardino, descending in either case into the valley of the Upper Rhine, safe from any hostile interference. Down that valley he might go through Chur and Sargans; or, crossing the Panixer Pass from Ilanz, fall upon the French at Glaris and drive Soult away from the Lindt. This was the safe way. On the other hand was the St. Gothard. This, it is true, was held by a small force of the enemy. But it was a pass which a small force could easily hold, and the road over it ended abruptly on the Lake of Luzern at Altdorf. After that there was nothing but a mountain path. Nevertheless, for Suvorof this was the direct road, and his determination to come to close quarters with the enemy at the earliest possible moment made him choose the St. Gothard route. To him the plan presented itself as a concentration against a stationary enemy. He and Strauch on the south, Auffenberg, Linken, and Jellacic on the east, and Hotze and Korsakof on the north, would move simultaneously against the French, who must either run or be ruined. "The true law of the art of war" he wrote to Hotze, "is to fall direct upon the enemy."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the 13th September; Mil. iv. 17; Fuchs, iii. 289. Compare his circular letter of the 5th Sept.; Mil. iv. 252; Fuchs, iii. 220.



Perhaps underestimating the strength of the French, and



certainly underestimating their capacity, he decided upon

a strategy which could only succeed if the enemy remained inactive, and must inevitably involve him in great perils if they did not.

The fundamental error of the plan being admitted, his immediate dispositions were nevertheless well made. He was not going to waste his men on a blind rush up a narrow gorge. He therefore ordered Strauch and Derfelden to advance along the Ticino and attack the actual pass in front, while Rosenberg was directed, with about 6000 men, to go by Dongio and Santa Maria to Disentis, and take the defenders in the rear. The two columns of Russians were to unite at Andermatt and descend the valley of the Reuss, while Strauch remained on the St. Gothard to prevent any attack from the Rhone valley. Auffenberg was to cross from the Rhine valley to the Maderanerthal and turn the defences of the Reuss.<sup>1</sup>

The question of maintaining the supplies of the Russian Army was not the least difficult of those which presented themselves. Waggon's could not go over the St. Gothard. Suvorof therefore instructed Melas to provide him with 1429 mules, to be ready for him when he reached Taverno. Each man was to carry food for 3 days and the mules were to carry enough for 4. The expedition was thus equipped for a week in advance. By the expiration of that time Suvorof expected to be at Schwyz, where he could get all he wanted from northern Switzerland, with the assistance of Hotze and Korsakof. All this was pure speculation. Schwyz was 90 miles away over the Alps, and 13 miles a day in such country would be very hard marching, even if there were no enemy in the way. The assumption that communications would be opened with northern Switzerland was also very audacious. It postulated the continued inactivity of Masséna, and whatever Suvorof's experience of Scherer, he had no right to calculate on similar irresolution in any other

<sup>1</sup> See the plan of attack in *Mil.* iv. 257.

Frenchman. The success of his strategy depended entirely on the luck being with him, and he should have known that in war there is no luck, save in one's self and one's troops.<sup>1</sup>

The march from Alessandria was made with great speed. The heavy baggage and artillery had been left behind, to be sent round by way of Chiavenna and the Engadine or Verona and the Tyrol, and 25 mountain guns had been taken from the arsenals of Piedmont. In this state the Russians covered more than 100 miles in 6 days. Arrived at Taverno on the 15th, Suvorof found to his dismay that the mules were not there. There was nothing to be done but wait. Even between Taverno and Bellinzona the road was useless for waggons. Five priceless days were thus wasted. By the 20th 650 mules had been collected, but the bulk of the baggage, food, and ammunition was loaded on to the horses of dismounted Cossacks.<sup>2</sup> On the 19th Rosenberg had started for Bellinzona. On the 21st, refusing to be diverted by renewed French activity against Rohan and Haddik, Suvorof set his main body in motion. Bagration led the vanguard, with 3000 men and 4 guns. Schveikovski followed, with 4400 men and 6 guns. Then came Förster, with 3100 men and 5 guns. Derfelden brought up the rear with 5000 men and 10 guns. A handful of Cossacks and pioneers was attached to each section, the remainder of the Cossacks serving on foot as a baggage-guard.<sup>3</sup>

The weather was bad, and the road an ill-kept track. In streaming rain the columns moved along the gorge of the Ticino, at first between the densely wooded slopes beyond Bellinzona, and then among the barren rocks which shut in the approach to the actual pass near Airolo. Derfelden, with Bagration, Schveikovski, and Förster, reached Biasco on the 21st, when Rosenberg

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iv. 262 ; Fuchs, iii. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iv. 22, 264, 265 ; Fuchs, iii. 291, 313, 315, 339, 347.

<sup>3</sup> Mil. iv. 26, 270 ; Fuchs, iii. 319.

had already started on his flanking march by Dongio and Santa Maria. On the 22nd the Russians were at Giornico, and Strauch, who had been waiting for them to come up, moved on to Faido. With this column rode Suvorof on a Cossack horse. He wore his plain uniform with a thin, unlined, and much-worn cloak, which he called his "paternal cloak." Gloves, as usual, he had not. Beside him rode an old Italian named Antonio Gamma. He had lodged in Gamma's house at Taverno, and the two men grew quickly to like each other. "If I had a hundred heads," said Gamma, "they should all lie at your feet." On the morning of Suvorof's departure, the Italian mounted his horse and announced his intention of going with him. To his weeping and protesting family he answered that he was the happiest of men; he would be riding with the great Suvorof. So the two old men went off together into the dark mountains, where there was such bloody young men's work to be done.<sup>1</sup>

On the 23rd the column reached Dazio. Suvorof was holding Derfelden back, so as to give Rosenberg time to get round the mountains to the north-east. Rosenberg, on his part, was struggling with continuous rain and cold in worse country than Suvorof, and his marches were wonderful. On the 21st he covered 16 miles from Bellinzona, and on the 22nd as much as 20. The night of that day was spent at a height of 8000 feet, without any fuel to cook food or to warm the soaked and shivering men. On the 23rd they descended to Santa Maria, and went on to Disentis, where they came into touch with Auffenberg's Austrians. Leaving Auffenberg to climb over into the Maderanerthal, Rosenberg pushed straight on to Tavetsch. He had marched from dawn till midnight, and had covered 18 miles. The next day he advanced towards Andermatt, on the St. Gothard road, and attacked the French on the heights to the east of the village.

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, *History of Suvorof*, ii. 172; *Misc.* 131.

The St. Gothard was defended by a French brigade, 4250 strong. About 2000 of these were posted on the actual pass above Airolo, 700 guarded the road to the Valais and the Furka, and the remainder faced Rosenberg. The natural defences were tremendous. The track rose steeply from Airolo, crossed a buttress of the massif, and plunged into a gorge at the junction of two torrents. Thence it rose again to the top of the pass and the hospice, 6800 feet above the sea and 3000 feet above Airolo. Without modern artillery and high explosives it would have been impossible to take such a position by direct attack. Nevertheless, in order to detain the enemy in front of him while Rosenberg completed his turning movement, Suvorof resolved to make an attempt. On the 24th, when Rosenberg was loyally fulfilling his duty at Andermatt, he himself began a vigorous battle at Airolo. He advanced in three columns, Bagration and Schveikovski turning the enemy's left, and three battalions climbing the rocks on the opposite bank of the Ticino, while Förster and the bulk of Strauch's Austrians pushed straight through Airolo. The flanking columns started from Dazio at 3 o'clock in the morning, and the centre column, with all the artillery, was held back so as not to come into action till the enemy had already been shaken from the flanks.<sup>1</sup>

The rain had ceased, but the day was cold and misty, and a biting wind met the Russians as they moved up the ravine. Bagration came into contact with the enemy at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and was soon fiercely engaged with about 1000 men posted in the rocks and gullies round the village of Bosco. The infantry and some dismounted Cossacks succeeded in getting round the enemy's left by a climb over the heights above. The left and centre columns had by this time come into action, and the French fell back behind the first of the two torrents. Here they were

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iv. 275 ; Fuchs, iii. 328, 335.

again attacked in front by Schveikovski and Förster, and again Bagration, continuing his advance at a higher level, forced them out of their position. Step by step the defenders withdrew to the summit of the pass, where they received help from Loison's brigade at Altdorf. Here Schveikovski and Förster made a third attack upon them. But numbers and courage could make no impression upon such a position, and after two attempts the Russians were brought to a stand. Already 1200 men had been killed and wounded, and the survivors were utterly exhausted by their fighting and climbing in clothes and boots unfit for such rugged work.<sup>1</sup> But there was still Bagration. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon he suddenly appeared on the French left and threatened their rear from the Mont St. Gothard. They beat a hasty retreat towards Hospithal, and the Russian main body crawled up the bloodstained track to the hospice.

After a brief rest at the hospice, the army resumed its march. Half-way towards Hospithal the French again offered some opposition and were driven back. At Hospithal they were reinforced by the indefatigable Lecourbe, with the rest of Loison's brigade. But at this point Rosenberg at last made his presence felt. He had encountered the enemy on the southern slope of the Krispalt early in the morning and drove them hard to the west. Miloradovitch, with the vanguard, fell impetuously upon the main body, consisting of two battalions, and pushed them over the ridge which separates the Rhine valley from that of Ober Alp. Around the Lake of Ober Alp a stubborn fight took place, and the French musketry was continuous and accurate. But Miloradovitch at last drove back their right wing, and the rest, fearing to be cut off from

<sup>1</sup> It was not until the day of the battle in the Muottothal that the Russians found out the secret of the French sureness of foot. Tight Prussian clothes and gaiters and lacquered boots without nails were, of course, worse than useless. See Starkof, 192.

Andermatt, gave way and retreated. They were hotly pursued, and reached the village almost at a run. So close were the Russians that the road was nearly cut between Andermatt and the Urner Loch, the tunnel which leads to the Devil's Bridge. But the French succeeded in occupying the mouth of the tunnel, and, with the reserve left in the village by Lecourbe, prepared to renew the struggle. The numbers were too unequal. As soon as he could collect his men, Rosenberg advanced to the attack. In the mist of evening his whole line charged with the bayonet, the French were outflanked and driven past the village, and they were not allowed to halt until they reached the other bank of the Reuss.

It was now 7 o'clock, and Rosenberg was in the rear of Lecourbe at Hospithal. Unfortunately he was not aware of this, and camped for the night, without thinking that 2 miles away he might have crushed Lecourbe against Suvorof. Lecourbe himself, knowing the ground, was able to carry his men into safety. Some crossed the Furka into the Rhone valley, and he himself with the rest, throwing his guns into the Reuss, climbed over the Betsberg and descended at Goeschenen. The exhausted Russians made little attempt at pursuit. Veletski's Austrian regiment was sent towards the Furka, and the rest of Suvorof's men lay where the last shots of the battle left them. Thus ended the first experience of a Russian Army in mountain warfare. The lesson had cost 2000 casualties. But it had done nothing to shake the confidence of Suvorof in his troops or of the men in their leader.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In a despatch to Hotze from Hospithal, Suvorof broke out into German doggerel. The following is an equivalent :

The twentieth we loaded every ass ;  
The twenty-first climbed Rosenberg the pass ;  
The twenty-second Wildfield went to fight ;  
The twenty-fourth Mount Gothard stormed by might ;  
And thus have we by bayonet and sword  
The poor down-fallen Switzerland restored.

Mil. iv. 283. " Wildfield " is Tierfeld, *i.e.* Derfelden.

Early in the morning Suvorof left Hospithal, and he immediately effected a junction with Rosenberg. His next task was to pass the Urner Loch and the Devil's Bridge. From Andermatt he sent General Kamyenski, with one of Derfelden's regiments, to follow Lecourbe over the Betsberg. With the main body he marched through the village and prepared to force the direct passage. The place was naturally impregnable, and if the defending force had been large enough to beat off attacks from the flank as well as in front, even Suvorof might have been turned back. The Reuss is not very deep, though, like all similar streams, it is very rapid, and its bed is sown with boulders. The road itself at that time ran at a rather lower level than to-day, and the existing bridge was actually built on the top of the other. The old bridge, over which Suvorof had to pass, was about 75 feet above the surface of the water, which at this point plunges down a series of falls with mist and a loud uproar. Before crossing the bridge the road runs along the right bank through the tunnel called the Urner Loch. This is about 80 yards long, and in those days was no higher than could be traversed by a pack-horse. Emerging from this passage, the road traverses a shelf of the precipice, turns sharply to the left over the bridge, and then again to the right, following the left bank down the stream. The old bridge, 30 yards long, was composed of two arches, the larger springing from the right side of the gulf to the left, and the smaller covering the gap between the abutment of the first on the left side and the principal mass of the cliff. On both sides of the abyss the rocks rise very steeply, without any covering of soil or trees, and, except by the road itself, there is no passage that can be found without great exertion and great danger. The whole scene, at the time of year when Suvorof came upon it, is gloomy and full of menace.

The French troops on the spot belonged to those



resolute men who had recently taught the Austrians how to conduct mountain warfare. On the 24th there were two battalions of Loison's brigade in readiness, and on the morning of the 25th they were joined by a battalion of grenadiers under Lecourbe himself, fresh from their night march over the Betsberg. The bulk of the defenders were on the right bank, between the mouth of the tunnel and the bridge, with a single gun.<sup>1</sup> Two companies were posted on the heights above to prevent a turning movement, and a small detachment was on the Russian side of the tunnel. For some inexplicable reason the French did not take the obvious course of destroying the bridge and distributing all their forces along the left bank. In the event they began to break down the bridge when it was too late, and they were driven across it in such confusion that it was easily repaired, and provided a convenient passage for the whole Russian Army.

Miloradovitch, followed by the rest of Rosenberg's troops, led the way, and after them came Derfelden. They were greeted by a burst of firing from the tunnel, and no attempt was made at a direct attack. While a steady fire was kept up on such of the enemy as appeared on the opposite bank a detachment of 300 volunteers, under Colonel Trubnikof, scrambled over the rocks to the right. At the same time Major Tryebogin, with 200 others, descended into the bed of the torrent, waded across it, sometimes up to the waist in water, struggled up the opposite bank, and got a footing among the rocks. Tryebogin's party was followed by a whole battalion of grenadiers, and the French were attacked from all sides.

The defenders in front of the bridge, with Tryebogin and the grenadiers firing from their right, and Trubnikof

<sup>1</sup> Hennequin, 344. Hennequin says that Lecourbe had apparently no cannon with him. The Russian authorities say that he had, and it is difficult to suppose that eye-witnesses can have imagined a cannon where none existed.

and his 300 showering bullets and rocks upon their heads from their left, were soon in hard case, and a belated attempt was made to destroy the smaller arch of the bridge. The advanced post must either retire or stand and be cut off when the bridge collapsed. Seeing them in confusion, the leading Russian battalion rushed boldly through the tunnel, took without blenching the scattered fire of the enemy in front and the more steady volleys of those on the other side of the stream, and drove some of their opponents into the gulf or across the bridge. Those who remained were all killed or taken, and the gun was thrown into the torrent. The Russians were for a time held up by the gap in the bridge. But the troops on the left bank were now well in the rear of the scene of action, and Kamyenski had effected a junction with them. The situation of the French was made still more hopeless by the arrival of Auffenberg at Amsteg by way of the Maderanerthal. Lecourbe, with his usual energy, struck back at him, and drove him up the Thal.<sup>1</sup> But this was only to enable the troops at the Devil's Bridge to get away. The French retreat was made in good order. They fell steadily back to Altdorf, and Suvorof's army marched as steadily after them down the pass. On the 26th there was a brisk fight at Altdorf, and Rosenberg drove Lecourbe out of the road towards the west.<sup>2</sup>

Up to this point Suvorof's design had been carried out, but not with clockwork precision. The situation was not encouraging. The weary troops had now traversed 40 miles of mountain country in 3 days, and had had some hard fighting as well. They were already faced with the prospect of insufficient food, in spite of the supplies which had been found at Andermatt, Amsteg, and Altdorf. They were a day behind the time-table, and many of the mules laden with food were still struggling along the St. Gothard, while others had been lost by accidents on the road.

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iv. 56, 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 58.

Before Suvorof lay the Lake of the Four Cantons, surrounded by lofty mountains, which plunged directly into the lake, leaving no space for a road on either side.<sup>1</sup> To the left there was no passage by which he could reach Korsakof. To the right the defile of the Schächenthal wound upwards to the Klausen Pass, beyond which lay the valley of the upper Lindt. In front the snow-crowned mass of the Rosstock, rising to 9000 feet above the sea, barred his way to Schwyz and Zurich. Over it wound two tracks, by which the tourist may still scramble to the Muottenthal with great pleasure in the holiday season. But at the end of September such paths in the Alps present great difficulties, and it was Suvorof's fortune to find the snow, the mist, and the cold wind at their worst.

Two other roads lay open to him, the St. Gothard and the Maderanerthal. But he was not yet aware of what was going on in the north, and he had no reason to think of getting away from the enemy. A man of such a temper as his was not to be deterred by any natural difficulty, and upon his troops he knew that he could rely to the uttermost extremity of human strength. The men were in want of food and boots, the pack animals and horses were exhausted, and Suvorof himself not only shared the common physical discomforts but bore the additional burden of his responsibility. He ordered the march to go on, over the Rosstock to Schwyz, and of the two paths he chose that which lay furthest from the lake. This was concealed from the view of Lecourbe, but at the same time was the longer and the less practicable of the two. Its highest point was the Kinzig Pass, 6500 feet above the level of the sea, and 5000 feet above Altdorf.

The Russians had entered Altdorf at midday on the

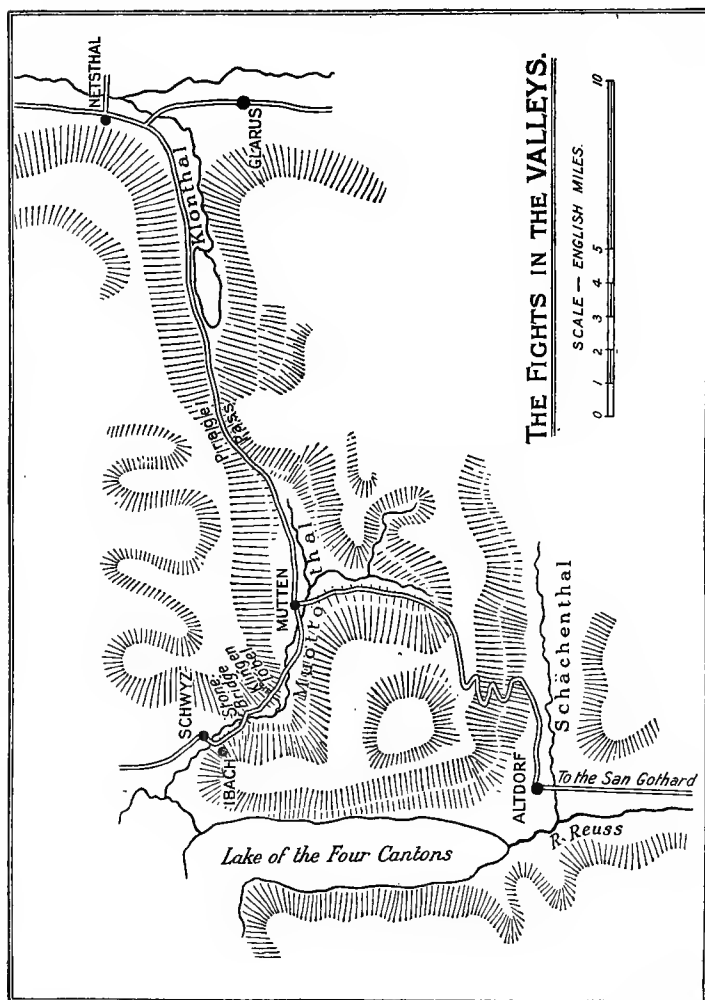
<sup>1</sup> It used to be alleged by Russian historians (e.g. Mil. iv. 59) that the Austrian officers attached to Suvorof had neglected to inform him that there was no road round the lake from Altdorf to Schwyz. This allegation is disproved by Hüffer, *Quellen*, 356, 363. Suvorof was told that this part of the route was a mere footpath.

26th. At 5 o'clock on the morning of the 27th the troops of Bagration wound their way through the streets of Börglen, on the slopes of the Rosstock. Military order soon vanished, and the march assumed the form of a scramble in single file up a path which often disappeared entirely from view. At one point the men could hardly find a foothold on a ledge, at another they struggled through scree, at a third they found themselves in deep snow. The condition of the animals was terrible. A Cossack might lead his horse safely over a dangerous spot, but many a horse or mule, stumbling across treacherous ground with a load of stores, part of a gun, ammunition, or priceless biscuits, lost its footing and was broken among the rocks. Not seldom a soldier or a muleteer was dragged down by a struggling beast and perished with it. The mist clung about the men, soaked them like heavy rain, and increased every difficulty and danger of the passage. Tight coats, belts, and breeches prevented free movement. Boots gave way, and every discomfort that can afflict a soldier on the march—cuts, bruises, and wet cold—played havoc with toes and feet. Over the highest point of the ridge, after the last abrupt climb, began a difficult descent, made worse than usual by the recent rains, which had in some places washed away every semblance of a path. The Russian advance-guard staggered into the Muottenthal at 5 o'clock in the evening. A journey of 12 miles as the crow flies had occupied as many hours.<sup>1</sup>

The men of the Army of Italy took no time for rest while there was an enemy before them. Bagration, with some mounted and dismounted cavalry, pushed on to Mütten, and attacked the French in the village. Not a man escaped of the 144 men who were there; 57 were killed and 87 taken. Bagration then disposed such of his men as had reached the spot, in readiness

<sup>1</sup> In 1894 a Swiss brigade, in bad weather, made the same passage in 11 hours. Hennequin, 354, n. 3.

to receive an attack from the direction of Schwyz. The last of the main body had not yet left Altdorf. The



whole path behind Bagration was filled with a long train of men and animals, and the situation of those

on the upper levels—hungry, cold, and footsore, with no shelter from the biting wind—was miserable beyond description. There was no wood to make fires, and fortunate indeed was the party which could lay hands on a candle end, shield it with paper, and by its aid crawl safely into a place where the wind was shut away by the rocks.<sup>1</sup> The last men of the main body drew up in the Muottenthal late in the evening of the 28th, and the rear-guard and the stragglers of the baggage-train were not got in till the 30th.<sup>2</sup> The appearance of this crowd of dirty, ragged, and ravenous strangers filled the inhabitants of the valley with horror and suspicion. They hid everything they could, and expected the worst. But the discipline of the Russians was not yet destroyed. So hungry were they that the first arrivals devoured their potatoes and cabbage raw. But they paid for everything they took, and at last their friendliness conquered even the terrors of the children.<sup>3</sup>

The difficult and perilous march had not escaped the notice of the enemy. Lecourbe was as little inclined as Suvorof to let a foe escape with impunity. He begged Masséna to send troops to Schwyz and at least 8000 men to Glaris, ordered Molitor to watch the Klönthal and throw some men into the Muottenthal, and directed the officer commanding at Schwyz to hold the valley against the invading Russians. He was convinced of success. "Suvorof with his 18,000 Russians is in our hands," he wrote to Masséna on the 27th.<sup>4</sup> He himself had very few men on the spot, and they were hardly less weary than the Russians themselves. Nevertheless, with about 900 of them he engaged the rear-guard in Altdorf, and on the 29th followed it vigorously up the Schächenthal, capturing

<sup>1</sup> Gryazef, 96.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iv.

<sup>3</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1900), ci. 131. The authority is the son of the Protestant pastor of the valley.

<sup>4</sup> Hennequin, 351, 352.

150 men, 60 horses, and a considerable quantity of ammunition and stores.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime events had happened which changed the whole aspect of the campaign. Up to this point, whatever the trials and sufferings of his own troops, and whatever the vexations which he had personally experienced at the hands of his Allies, Suvorof had been pressing on to a junction with another army, with the aid of which he intended to destroy the main force of the French. At Schwyz, too, he expected to find ample supplies sent to meet him by Korsakof and Hotze. But on the 28th September, when his main body was still struggling down into the Muottothal, Colonel Suitchof, who had been sent with a squadron of Cossacks in the direction of Glaris, returned with appalling news. Korsakof had been beaten at Zurich and had retreated to Schaffhausen; Hotze had been beaten on the Lindt, and no news could be got of his subsequent movements or his present situation; and Masséna himself was in all probability already at Schwyz. Everything had gone to smoke.

This meant the complete failure of all Suvorof's plans for the overthrow of the French power in Switzerland, and the consequent imminence of his own destruction. The defeat of Korsakof at Zurich had been as overwhelming as that of Moreau at Novi, and much more skilfully done. Masséna had beaten a stupid and arrogant commander by admirably conceived and executed manœuvres. Leaving the streets of Zurich littered with his artillery, his baggage, and his wounded, Korsakof had burst his way through the enemy's line, and carried away into safety some 5000 exhausted, though not dispirited troops. Some other units eventually reached him. But for practical purposes his army had ceased to exist.<sup>2</sup> The triumph of Masséna had been

<sup>1</sup> Hennequin, 357.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iv. chap. lx.; Hennequin, chap. x.; Dedon, *Relation Détaillée*, etc. (Paris, 1801), an admirable account of Masséna's passage of the Limmat.

consummated by three other victories, no less important in their cumulative effect. Soult had beaten Hotze on the Lindt, killing, wounding, or capturing almost half of his force. Jellacic had attacked Molitor at Glaris, but on learning of Soult's success had retreated beyond the Rhine, as far as Maienfeld. Molitor had then turned upon Linken, and chased him with such vigour to Schwanden that he continued his retreat to Ilanz. By the 29th all the French Armies were free to deal with Suvorof. Masséna marched upon Schwyz, and Molitor to the mouth of the Klönthal, as the Field-Marshal collected his hungry and exhausted soldiers in the Muottothal and prepared for the hunters to close upon him in the trap.

Any other commander in such a situation might have thought of capitulating. For Suvorof there was only a choice of ways of extricating himself by force. He summoned a council of war. Bagration was early on the spot and found the Field-Marshal in great distress. In full uniform and wearing all his orders he paced rapidly up and down the room, and not noticing the entry of Bagration, broke out into disjointed utterance: "Parades—drills—great respect for one's self—defend one's self—hats off!—merciful Lord! . . . Aye, and it must be . . . and in time . . . but needs more to know how to wage war, know the lie of the land, be able to calculate, not allow one's self to be deceived, understand how to beat. . . . But to be beaten is easy . . . throw away so many thousands! . . . and such men! . . . in one day . . . Merciful Lord!" Bagration withdrew, and left the old man to himself.

When he returned, and the full council, including the Grand Duke Constantine, assembled, Suvorof wore a different aspect. He bowed to the officers, shut his eyes, and remained silent for a few moments. Then he glared fiercely at the company, and began a vehement address: "Korsakof is smashed and driven behind the Rhine. Hotze is beaten, we have no news of him, and



his corps is scattered. Jellacic has retreated. All our plan is destroyed." Then he launched upon a passionate denunciation of the Austrian Government, recited all the checks, slights, and provocations which he had suffered at its hands since he entered Italy, and ascribed the defeat of Korsakof to its withdrawal of the Archduke. He described the miserable condition of his own troops, their want of food, clothing, and ammunition, all due to the delay of 5 days at Taverno. But for that delay Korsakof would not have been beaten at Zurich. All was due to the perfidy and treachery of Thugut and the War Council at Vienna. Now they were on the verge of ruin. "One hope left to us is in Almighty God; another in the bravery and unselfishness of our soldiers. We are Russians. God is with us. Save the honour of Russia! Save the son of our Emperor, the pledge of his gracious Imperial confidence!" And, bursting into tears, he flung himself at the feet of the Grand Duke.

The young man raised him and embraced him, unable to speak. When the old man had recovered himself, Derfelden, the senior officer present, declared the opinion of all. Derfelden was sixty-four years old, but he spoke with as much fire as Suvorof himself: "Father Alexander Vassilyevitch! We see and know what threatens us. Surely you know us, father, you know fighters, the devoted ministers of your will, who love you beyond all reckoning. Trust us! We swear to you before Almighty God, for ourselves and all the rest, whatever may betide. You will find no cowardice in us—we're Russians and don't know the loathsome thing—and no grumbling. Let a hundred thousand enemies stand before us, and let the mountains in our way be twice—ten times as high; we shall conquer both; we shall overcome everything and not shame the arms of Russia. If we die we shall die with glory! Lead us where you think fit; do as you know how; we are all yours, father! We are Russians!"

This was followed by a general cry: "We swear it before Almighty God!" Suvorof, who had listened to his old comrade-in-arms with closed eyes, opened them, looked proudly upon his followers, and cried: "I hope! Joy! Merciful God, we are Russians! I thank you! Thanks! We shall beat the enemy; a victory over them and intrigue together—victory there shall be!"<sup>1</sup>

There was no question of going on to Zurich, nor can there have been much debate about the direction of the next march. To push on to Schwyz was to court disaster. The only possible route was over the Brägel, 5000 feet high, into the Klönthal. At Glaris there would be a chance of uniting with Linken, and afterwards with Hotze and Korsakof. Orders were issued accordingly. Auffenberg was to leave at once, beat the enemy from the Brägel, and drive them as far as possible down the Klönthal. Early on the next day, the 30th, Bagration was to follow him, and both were to push on to Glaris itself. Schveikovski's division was to start after Bagration. Rosenberg and Förster were to hold the Muottenthal until all the rest had got over the Brägel. Rosenberg in particular was to fight to the last, not to yield a step to the enemy, and, if possible, to drive him as far as Schwyz, but no further.<sup>2</sup>

Auffenberg's brigade started immediately, cleared the pass of the enemy's outposts, and descended into the Klönthal. Bagration and Schveikovski left early next morning, and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon were trudging in straggling formation through the boulders, undergrowth and swampy ground between the cliffs and the head of the lake, which filled a large part of the other valley. They found Auffenberg already hotly engaged. The Austrians, 2000 strong,

<sup>1</sup> Starkof, 210, 281. According to Starkof, Suvorof said, "*Jellacic and Linken* have retreated." In fact, at this time the retirement of Linken was not known to Suvorof. He only heard of it in the Klönthal.

<sup>2</sup> Fuchs, iii. 348.

had been in action since the morning. The French battalion at the head of the lake had been driven back along the narrow road between the water and the mountains as far as the eastern end of the lake. There Molitor brought up another battalion, and Auffenberg in his turn was compelled to give ground. In spite of his superior numbers the Austrian commander made no attempt at a turning movement, and was unable by repeated frontal attacks to dislodge the French.<sup>1</sup> Molitor himself, clamouring for further reinforcements, was equally unable to defeat Auffenberg, and the affair was not settled even after the arrival of Bagration.

Three of the latter's battalions were sent up the heights to the left, and three advanced straight down the valley. Auffenberg simultaneously withdrew, followed by Molitor, who was attacked, as soon as he passed the head of the lake, in front and on the left flank. The French were driven back with heavy loss into the gap, but they rallied there and held their ground until the evening. Suvorof and Schweikowski came up after dark. More of the baggage-animals were lost on the mountains, and the Russians camped for the night in rain and mist, shivering with cold and half-fed.

The rest of the army in the Muottenthal had in the meantime fought a battle of a decisive character. At dawn on the 30th there had been some firing between the outposts, but during the morning the Russians remained quietly in their bivouacs. Rosenberg and Miloradovitch with three regiments occupied the village of Mutton; Rehbinder with his own regiment, a battalion of Jägers, and two regiments of dismounted Cossacks lay in front of the Franciscan monastery, a mile lower down the stream of the Muotto; and another

<sup>1</sup> Milyutin alleges (iv. 132, 317) that Auffenberg actually entered into negotiations with Molitor. This is denied by Angeli, and the French have no records of it. Almost certainly it is not true. Hennequin, 362, n. 2.

battalion of Jägers and a handful of Cossacks under Major Sabanyeyef a mile still further towards Schwyz. The three regiments of infantry and two of Cossacks, which together composed the rear-guard, were at this time still descending the pass some miles away. There were about 5500 men at Rosenberg's disposal in the valley.

On the other hand Masséna, after a hurried journey by water to Altdorf, had returned to Schwyz. By noon he had about 8000 men on the spot, and with these he marched upon Sabanyeyef at the mouth of the narrow valley. The first shots were exchanged about 2 o'clock, and the Russians fell slowly back upon Rehbinder, who on his part came up to meet them. Rehbinder's men went gallantly forward with the bayonet, and made no fewer than six charges upon the French. The latter, being greatly superior in numbers, eventually drove back the Russians and captured one of their guns. But Rehbinder himself led a counter-attack, and after a murderous combat the gun was carried off in triumph.<sup>1</sup> Shortly afterwards, it being then about 5 o'clock, the remaining three Russian regiments came up from Muten. Miloradovitch passed through the disordered fragments of Rehbinder's regiment and closed upon the enemy, while the two Cossack regiments clambered round the sides of the valley, separated into little groups, and attacked them in flank. The Cossacks were especially effective, not only inflicting loss upon the French but also greatly embarrassing them by their unexpected appearances and sudden withdrawals. The French at last gave way and were driven headlong down the valley for more than two miles. Some of the Cossacks outran them, and fell upon their rear-guard at the narrow entrance of the valley. But night stopped the pursuit, and the Russian main body withdrew to the village of Muten.

On the next day the fighting was renewed. Rosenberg

<sup>1</sup> Starkof, 271.

had now his full strength with him and could put about 7000 men into line. The exact French numbers are unknown. But their total strength can hardly have been less than 15,000. Masséna sent a column, the composition of which is unknown, over the heights to the north. These troops went astray and took no part in the fighting. It is nevertheless beyond question that the French troops actually engaged were very superior in numbers to the Russian.<sup>1</sup> The formation of the ground favoured the defenders. The road from Schwyz crossing the torrent of the Muota at Ibach follows the left bank into the gorge, through which the water hurries down from the Thal itself. At the entrance to the narrowest part of the defile the track once more crosses the stream over a stone bridge, and then mounts the rocks on the right bank. Two miles beyond the bridge the path emerges into the open valley, which at its widest part is about a mile across. On the morning of the 1st October the Russian advanced post, a regiment of infantry and some Cossacks, stood at the point where the torrent of Klingen Tobel crosses the road, a mile above the stone bridge. Two regiments of infantry and four of Cossacks under Rehbinder were stationed two miles behind them, and the rest of the force lay at the village of Mutton, further still to the rear.

At 11 o'clock the French came on in three columns headed by skirmishers. Masséna himself with a strong reserve and 5 guns held the narrow mouth of the valley. The first attacking column with artillery followed the road. The other two, pressing into the open ground, marched along to right and left of the stream. The Russian outpost retired, as on the previous day, firing steadily, and attacking any incautiously advanced parties with the bayonet. They were met at the monastery by Rosenberg, who had drawn up his main body

<sup>1</sup> Masséna had Mortier's division, a demi-brigade from that of Loison, Hasan's division, and a reserve of grenadiers at Schwyz. Mil. iv. 319; Hennequin.

in two lines across the valley. The retreating detachments passed to right and left of these lines and re-formed on their flanks. The whole mass then bore down upon the French, fired a volley, and charged with the bayonet. With these serried ranks in front and swarms of yelling Cossacks on right and left the French were unable to deploy, fell into disorder, and were driven pell-mell down into the gorge.

There they were met by the reserve, and the Russian advance was for a time completely stopped. But the Cossacks got round on the flanks, and the whole body of the French was pushed through the defile as far as the Klingen Tobel. Here the fugitives made another stand. Wasting no time on frontal attacks in a place as difficult as the Devil's Bridge itself, Rosenberg sent his Cossacks round the rocks overhanging the French left. They passed completely round the enemy infantry, and attacked the gunners. Then Förster's infantry rushed down the road; the French resistance once more collapsed; and a desperate struggle for safety began on the narrow road, blocked with artillery and ammunition-waggons. Many of the runaways fell into the torrent from the stone bridge, and the Russians mercilessly slaughtered the rearmost of those who kept on their feet. The rout continued as far as Schwyz. The 67th demi-brigade met the pursuers at Schonenbuch, and Rosenberg withdrew his main body to the Muottenthal. But some of the mounted Cossacks chased the enemy into the streets of Schwyz itself. About 1200 prisoners, including General Lacour, remained in the hands of the victors, and several cannon with limbers and ammunition were taken, and either buried or thrown into the torrent. The losses of both sides in killed and wounded are uncertain. About 1500 French wounded were brought back by the Russians, and were left in the monastery, and it is probably not unfair to estimate the total casualties of the French at about 4000 men. Some 600 Russian wounded were left behind, and the

total Russian losses were about 1000 killed and wounded and a few prisoners.<sup>1</sup>

Masséna was modest in his estimate of the importance of this battle. But in fact, he had suffered a complete defeat where he had expected a decisive victory.<sup>2</sup> Rosenberg had not only saved Suvorof from pursuit, but had driven the French headlong before him, and inflicted such loss upon them that he was afterwards able to climb over the crest of the Bragel without any interference. The night after the battle was spent by the troops in collecting the dead and wounded, and an eager search for the food carried by the dead French or thrown away by the panic-stricken survivors. Great was the rejoicing when some Cossack found a cheese or a sausage in the woods; and even soldiers' biscuits were carefully collected and devoured on the spot.<sup>3</sup>

The day of the great victory in the Muottenthal had been spent by the other half of the army in fighting as fierce though not so successful. On the night of the 30th September Bagration and four grenadier battalions, a battalion of Jägers, and four companies of Austrian infantry had scrambled up the rocks to the left of the road and attained a position directly above the right flank of the French. Molitor's patrols encountered them, and before dawn the rattle of musketry was heard all over the heights. This was the signal for Schveikovski to advance boldly down the valley. A scrambling fight among the pine trees and precipices drove the French light troops along the side of the mountain, while their main body retreated 4 miles along the road until it reached the valley of the Lindt.

Here desperate fighting took place. Molitor was determined at all costs to prevent Suvorof from effecting a junction with the Austrians in the north. He

<sup>1</sup> Starkof, 219.

<sup>2</sup> See his *Bulletin Historique*, set out in Hennequin, 506.

<sup>3</sup> Starkof, 219.

threw a battalion and a half with 4 guns across the river at Netsthal, and blew up the bridge when some of the pursuing Russians were actually upon it. The rest of his troops, two battalions and a half with 3 guns, he drew back to the north of Netsthal. Here he was at once attacked by the Russians, and as each battalion in turn emerged from the valley it threw itself upon the French. The latter after a determined struggle gave way, and left 300 prisoners, a flag, and one gun behind them.<sup>1</sup> Molitor fell back to Näfels, while his detachment on the other side of the river maintained a brisk fire on the flank of the pursuers. Rallying at Näfels, the French, inferior to the Russians in nothing but numbers, turned and drove them back to Netsthal. This attack and counter-attack were twice repeated. The third charge of the Russians almost carried the bridge at Näfels, and the two forces were struggling desperately on the middle of the bridge when a final effort of the 84th demi-brigade turned the scale. A fourth onslaught again reduced the French to extremities, and the road to the north seemed at last to be definitely in the hands of the Russians, when the 2nd Swiss demi-brigade, followed by some of Gagan's division, came up from the rear. Molitor harangued the Swiss, reminded them of an earlier Swiss victory on the same ground, and launched his new reinforcements at the bridge. The Russians were driven back once more to Netsthal. There a group of Cossacks and a battalion of infantry had at last succeeded in crossing the river and driving back the detachment on the right bank, but the impetuous advance of the French main body compelled them to withdraw. Nevertheless, the struggle was not even yet decided, and once more the Russians succeeded in pressing on to Näfels. As night fell, Gagan himself came up behind Molitor with a fresh battalion of grenadiers, and about 9 o'clock 400 of the 94th

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iv. 148 ; Venanson's *Narrative in Jomini*, vol. xii.



demi-brigade reached Näfels. The arrival of these new troops settled the fate of the day. For the sixth time the Russians were driven back, this time beyond Netsthal, and Molitor firmly established himself for the night in the position which he had taken up in the morning. The conduct of the Russian troops on this occasion left nothing for criticism, but that of the French was beyond praise. The losses on either side remain as uncertain here as in the Muottenthal. But the flanking fire of Molitor's detachment across the Lindt more than made up for any inferiority in his numbers, and there can be little doubt that the Russian casualties were the heavier.

This heavy fighting between Netsthal and Näfels had been carried on by Bagration and Auffenberg. Suvorof, with the bulk of Schveikovski's division, had entered Glaris. There he was joined by Rosenberg. On the 2nd October the latter began his march over the Bragel. Before setting out, he sent a messenger to Schwyz demanding rations for 12,000 men, who were to enter the town on the next day. Deceived by this, or shaken by their overthrow of the 1st, the French made no attempt at an attack. Not till the 3rd did their vanguard enter the valley, and, pushing on towards the pass, gather in a few score prisoners, a large number of horses and mules, and the cannon which the Russians had pitched into the ravines. After a toilsome march and two nights on the rocks of the Bragel the last of Rosenberg's rear-guard were gathered into Glaris. The whole army was in a most miserable state. Their clothes and boots were in rags, they had suffered all the hardships of continual marching and fighting, cold, wet, and hunger, and when the French magazines at Glaris and the resources of the inhabitants had been exhausted, each man received little more than a few biscuits and a pound of cheese. Officers and soldiers were in the same state. No one would allow Suvorof to go on foot. But Rehbinder's boots were without

soles, and if any general was in better case it was not because he had claimed the privileges of his rank. Misfortune had reduced all to one common level of physical wretchedness, as it had raised all to one common level of reputation.

Suvorof was faced on the 4th October with the same difficulty of choosing a way of escape as had confronted him in the Muottenthal, six days before. The obvious route was through Netsthal and Näfels. True, Molitor barred the way, and had shown by his fighting on the 1st that his own temper and that of his troops were of the most resolute and fiery description. But Molitor until the night of the 4th had only 8000 men with him, and the rest of the available French troops were distributed between the mouth of the Muottenthal and the Lakes of Zurich and Wallenstadt. Suvorof had still 16,000 men, who had already proved themselves to be inferior to none in the world in spirit. There can be no doubt that if he had marched straight upon Netsthal, even Molitor must have yielded the passage. There was besides Jellacic, who could make a diversion in the rear of the French.

These were obvious facts, and even if Suvorof did not know the exact situation and strength of the French troops in front of him, there can be little doubt that, in ordinary circumstances, he would have marched straight ahead. But the circumstances were not ordinary. Apart from the want of ammunition, which, more than the want of food, reduced the actual fighting value of his army, the ill-feeling against the Austrians had reached a point beyond which it could hardly be suppressed. There had as yet been no hint of disloyalty or want of co-operation between the different units of his army. But their own hardships, consequent upon the destruction of Korsakof's force at Zurich, which in its turn was attributed to the retirement of the Archduke from Switzerland, had confirmed in the minds of the Russian officers and men that contempt

and distrust of Austria as an ally, which had been created by previous experience and their knowledge of the Viennese plan of campaign. Linken, too, had run away without being beaten; and Jellacic could not be trusted to do anything else. The time had come to abandon the attempt to support those who had never supported them, and to save the remainder of the precious Russian Army for the further purposes of the Tsar. It was therefore decided at a Council of War, held on the 4th October, to make for Chur by way of the Panixer Pass and Ilanz; and a message was sent on to Linken to have 20,000 rations ready at Chur for the 6th and 7th.<sup>1</sup>

On the night of the 4th began the last stage of the march into safety. The heavily wounded were left behind and commended to the mercy of the French. Bagration on this occasion commanded the rear-guard. He had at his disposal the same units as those which had formed his vanguard at the beginning of the campaign. But their total strength, once nearly 3000, was now only 2000. One-third of his force had been killed, wounded, or captured.<sup>2</sup> As the rest of the army marched away, he drew his force across the valley in front of Schwanden. Molitor, who knew of Suvorof's intention on the 4th, sent one battalion along the Alps to the right of Bagration, where its fire could command the road to Engi and the Panixer Pass. But with the aid of an additional battalion Bagration was able, in spite of his want of artillery, to hold Molitor in check with the bayonet alone during the whole of the 5th. Falling slowly back to Engi he remained there for two hours, resisting all attempts of the French to dislodge

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iv. 153, 327. Suvorof wrote in his own hand, "There is no hope of the Imperialists." Weyrother had written to Jellacic on the 3rd, telling him that Suvorof was going to move on to Wallenstadt, and Jellacic actually took steps to meet him. Hüffer, 402.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iv. 156. The losses of his six battalions amounted, between the 14th September and the 6th October, to 499 killed, 524 wounded, and 141 missing—in all, 1164 men. Bagration's *Journal*, 54.

him. As night fell he got away with difficulty to Matt, closely pursued by the enemy, who captured a considerable number of prisoners, horses, and mules.<sup>1</sup>

The night was spent in the neighbourhood of Elm, and a part of the troops was under arms until daybreak. At 2 o'clock in the morning the vanguard moved up the defile towards the Ringenkopf, and when the light came the main body was beyond the reach of the enemy. The weather was worse than before. Heavy rain in the valley and snow on the heights, a bitterly cold wind, and dense mist combined to render this the most terrible of all the marches of Suvorof's army. The local guides fled and left the soldiers to take care of themselves. The hardships of the Rosstock and the Bragel were forgotten in the extremity of endurance and exertion required by the Panixer Pass. The soaked and shivering column wandered as best it could among the rocks. In many places a false step meant death, and not a few of those who sat down to rest perished of cold. More than 300 unhappy beasts of burden fell with their precious loads and were left behind. All the remaining cannon were flung over the precipices. An officer, rashly venturing on horseback, rolled from top to bottom of one of the fatal slopes and was dashed to pieces. Suvorof himself was held in his saddle by two Cossacks, and to all his requests to be left alone his sturdy protectors answered nothing but "Sit still!"<sup>2</sup> At one point a few Cossack lances were burnt to provide him with hot tea, and no other fuel was to be found for the whole army but similar weapons and the pack-saddles. But the spirit of the commander and his followers remained what it had always been, and if they groaned, it was not in reproach. Most spent the night of the 6th along the mountain track. Only the vanguard under Milorodovitch succeeded in reaching the little village of Panix,

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iv. 156, 157; Hennequin, 380, 381; Gryazef, 181.

<sup>2</sup> Gryazef, 183.

on the southern slopes, 4500 feet below the summit of the pass. Others found shelter in the pinewoods. The majority were left without food or fuel or any other protection than that of the rocks. By midday on the 7th most of the troops had come into Panix, and the march was resumed. In the evening Suvorof reached Ilanz, and stragglers were still crawling into the town on the following morning. Some 200 men, too exhausted to move further, were taken prisoner at Panix. The remainder, now about 15,000 strong, reached Chur on the 8th. There they lit fires and cooked food, repaired their boots and cleaned their weapons, laughed, jested, and sang, and prepared for new encounters with the enemy.<sup>1</sup> In seventeen days one quarter of the whole original force had been lost, with all the pack-animals, artillery, and baggage.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, there were brought into Chur no less than 1400 French prisoners.<sup>3</sup>

Suvorof's defeated soldiers had no reason to doubt that after a short rest they would be able to face any enemy that might be brought against them. Their failure had been due to the stupidity of the Austrian Cabinet, the rashness of Korsakof, and the obstacles thrown in their own way by Nature. Of what had been in their leader and themselves, patience, courage, and a mutual loyalty not to be broken by any act or event proceeding from without, they and he remained in full and abounding possession. Such virtues in such men are increased rather than diminished by suffering; and if Suvorof and his army had been proud, strong, and terrible when they swung gaily out of Bellinzona, they were prouder, stronger, and more terrible when they dragged their bleeding feet over the cobble-stones of Chur.

Nevertheless, the shock to both leader and men had been too severe. March discipline, never very strong, had disappeared in those terrible mountains, and at

<sup>1</sup> Mil. iv. chap. lxiii. ; Hennequin, 379, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iv. 330.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 148.

Glaris, Ilanz, and Chur, the inhabitants had suffered from the irresponsible and purposeless plundering which always marks the track of a demoralised Russian Army.<sup>1</sup> Suvorof himself, though still emitting flashes of his old energy, began to waver in his purpose. On the 7th October, when his rear-guard was still trailing over the savage ridge of the Ringenkopf, he wrote from Panix to the Archduke Charles saying, that if the latter would provide food and ammunition, he was himself prepared to unite in a fresh attempt against the enemy.<sup>2</sup> On the road from Chur to Feldkirch he repeated this offer.<sup>3</sup> But the Archduke could not adopt his plans, and he could not adopt the Archduke's. Wickham, the English envoy, met him at Feldkirch with Colloredo, an aide-de-camp of the Archduke, but was unable to produce an agreement. His own opinion of Suvorof was of the most unfavourable kind. It would have been impossible for any English diplomatist to appreciate a man whose manners so lacked the calm repose of a perfect gentleman. But Suvorof showed himself not only eccentric, but thoroughly unwilling to co-operate any further with Austrians. The Archduke, on his side, lost patience.<sup>4</sup> On the 18th October Suvorof held a Council of War. It resolved unanimously that from the Imperialists nothing was now to be expected but treachery, that on no account should a forward movement be undertaken, and that for the necessary refitting of the troops a halt should be made on the right bank of the Rhine.<sup>5</sup> This finally settled the question of a renewal of hostilities by the Alliance.

Suvorof's own temper is apparent from his correspondence. On the 20th he wrote from Linden to Count Peter Tolstoy :

<sup>1</sup> Wickham's *Correspondence*, ii. 258.

<sup>2</sup> Fuchs, iii. 355.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 381, 424.

<sup>4</sup> See the correspondence in Mil. iv. 351 *et seq.*; Fuchs, iii. 381 *et seq.*; Höffer, 150 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> Report of Suvorof to the Tsar; Fuchs, iii. 440, 443.

The General wants to spellbind me with his Demos-thenics. You are within three steps of him—settle with him, and let me know; I have my answer ready for his knowallness. The hero on the defensive has let them wrest from him in this campaign—all through protecting the hereditary dominions. . . . How can he not be ashamed before the conqueror? And he makes these proposals to me! Let him polish up his tarnished glory. Let him take his strong army and enter Switzerland now; in a month he must free it; if not, I shall have refitted in quarters and shall be ready to act with him, even in a winter campaign.<sup>1</sup>

And in some notes of the same day, entitled “Military Physics,” he showed the same resentment against the Archduke:

The Archduke Charles, being not at the Court but on active service, is a General like Suvorof, except that the latter is the senior in experience, and it is he who has overthrown the theories of the century, chiefly by his conquests in Poland and Italy; the rules of military science are his province. All argument and interviews would be superfluous.

And among the rules appended to this are some characteristic touches:

No jealousies, no counter-marches, no demonstrations, which are only child’s play. . . . It is a question of a month. One need only be on one’s guard against the bottomless pit of systematic rules.<sup>2</sup>

Also on the 20th October he wrote to Razumovski:

This crooked Thugut will fling Europe and himself into danger. I declare that Potsdam will suffer from his cunning with the other Cabinets—a worse man than any of them; but will it be for long? In a brief space they and he and Vienna will be swallowed up by the new Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, iii. 447; *Voronts. Arkh.* xxiv. 348.

<sup>2</sup> Fuchs, iii. 455.

Out of his bilious eyrie he enticed me from Italy, where my heart was set on Lyons and Paris. . . . The Archduke Charles left Switzerland. The price was Lieutenant-General Korsakof—to the joy of the gallows-birds—the price was I and a great and high-tempered Ally—the price was every atom of the common cause !

The various beliefs, opinions, and customs of our Ally's armies—I long ago put many of them to the proof, and found them false—only further evidence in this campaign. All their commanders, mercenaries, spying for Thugut for their living, were bound indissolubly to me by duty and friendship, and from that fact sprang all my incredible victories and conquests. The existing Army of Italy in its present state, through the pestilential contrivances of Thugut, will remain dead capital, as I am here at this moment, and the Archduke Charles himself, too. For new Campo Formio or Reichenbachs.<sup>1</sup>

At this point the Tsar himself interfered. Enraged by Suworof's stream of complaints, and finally by the defeat of Korsakof, he wrote on the 22nd October to the Austrian Emperor, before receiving the report of Suworof's Council of War, to put an end to the Alliance :

Seeing my troops abandoned and thus delivered to the enemy by the Ally on whom I counted most, his policy contrary to my views, and the safety of Europe sacrificed to the plans of your Monarchy for its own aggrandisement ; having besides every ground for being dissatisfied with the double and artificial methods of its Minister, of whose motives, out of regard for Your Imperial Majesty, I desire to remain ignorant—I declare to you, with the same loyalty which made me fly to Your aid and co-operate in the success of Your arms, that from this moment I abandon Your interests, to occupy myself solely with my own and those of my other Allies.<sup>2</sup>

He therefore ordered Suworof to return to Russia. Before receiving the order of recall, the old warrior addressed a final warning and appeal to the Archduke :

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, iii. 449 ; *Voronts. Arkh.* xxiv. 348.

<sup>2</sup> Mil. iv. 388.



It is an old soldier, nearly sixty years in harness, who speaks to you, who has led the troops of Joseph II. and Francis II. to victory, and confirmed Galicia in the power of the illustrious house of Austria; who is not for the babble of Demosthenes, nor for the Academicians who do nothing but destroy judgement, nor for Hannibal's Senate. I am not for jealousies, demonstrations, counter-marches; instead of these puerilities—apprehension, quickness, energy are my guides.

Let the two armies serve the two Emperors, the Coalition, and all Europe, like honest heroes! . . . Otherwise, there will be more Campo Formidos [*sic*]; already you see the new Rome walking in the steps of the old; gaining friends, she will come to honouring Germany with the title of Ally, as she did Spain, Holland, and, a little earlier, Italy; to reduce her later in her own time to the lowest level of estimation, the rank of client or subject, and the territory of flourishing nations into provinces.<sup>1</sup>

Soon afterwards came his order of recall, and he left the scene of his disastrous and yet glorious campaign.

<sup>1</sup> Letter of the 29th October; Mil. iv.; Fuchs, iii. 478.

## CHAPTER XII

### RETURN AND DEATH

Letting himself go—Meeting with Korsakof—Catching the wind—Christmas games—Taking it out of Thugut's son-in-law—Correspondence with Nelson—Breaking down—Desperate remedies—Another blow from Paul—Arrival at Petersburg—Death.

DURING his profitless argument about plans of campaign and on his journey home, Suvorof swam, or rather skipped into the ken of more than one curious observer.

De Roveréa, an officer of the Swiss levies, called upon him at Lindau, and has recorded his interview with "a man of middle height and lean, clad in a white woollen shirt, carelessly buttoned breeches, and a much-worn hat, with an old boot on one foot and a slipper on the other; his face wrinkled as if pulled about by hard thinking." Suvorof received him warmly, put his hand on his shoulder and spoke to him in French, throwing back his head and screwing up his eyes. At the end of the conversation he kissed Roveréa on the forehead and invited him to dinner.<sup>1</sup>

At the same place Suvorof effected a junction with the Prince de Condé and the beaten army of Korsakof. His first encounter with the latter caused him great agitation. When the defeated Commander came to present his report, the Field-Marshal was pacing up and down his room among a group of officers and civilians, and fumbling at his clothes. "Merciful God!" he

<sup>1</sup> G. de Tavel, *Mémoires de F. de Roveréa*.

exclaimed, "I ought to receive Alexander Mikhailovitch decently; he's the pattern of civility himself, he's a courtier, he's a gentleman of the chamber." Then he stopped, shut his eyes, and pulled at his cuffs. The unhappy Korsakof entered, and halted in confusion at the sight of the company in which he was to be received. Suvorof looked up, gave him a slight bow, took his report, and shut his eyes again. Then he broke forth, "Alexander Mikhailovitch! What have we done? The Trebbia, the Tidone, Novi—sisters. But Zurich?" And he raised himself on tiptoe, threw back his head, and made a very bitter grimace. He repeated his words, and then demanded a spontoon from one of the officers who stood near. Holding it at the present, he demanded, "Alexander Mikhailovitch! How did you do honour to Masséna? This, thus, was it this way? Then you did him honour in no Russian style; merciful God! not in Russian style." Then he gave back the spontoon; backed towards the door of his cabinet; called Korsakof, and shut himself up with his miserable subordinate for a whole hour. Korsakof came out looking like a dead man.<sup>1</sup>

But soon afterwards Suvorof treated Korsakof in a different fashion. On the 24th October he formally received a number of officers, including Korsakof, an Austrian General, and the Duc de Berry, who represented Condé. On this occasion he directed his wrath against the Austrian. He greeted De Berry with great warmth, and expressed his indignation at the way in which Condé's army had been treated. Turning upon the Austrian, he demanded if they wanted to destroy the French *émigrés*? Then he went on, "You have brought me an order from the Archduke. At Vienna I am at his feet, but here it is quite different, and I take orders only from my Sovereign." Then he went about among the Russians, praised those who had distinguished themselves

<sup>1</sup> This is related by Suvorof's Secretary, Trefurt, in *Russ. Star.* (1876), i. 214.

in Switzerland, and told one, who had not, that he ought to resign his commission. Poor Korsakof overheard this, and tried to steal out of the room before the eye of the terrible Commander-in-Chief fell upon him. But Suvorof was too quick for him. The occasion for a slap at Austria was too good to be missed, and instead of humiliating Korsakof, the veteran declared in a loud voice, "You saw, gentlemen, that Korsakof has gone out, though he said nothing to me, or I to him. He is more unfortunate than guilty; 50,000 Austrians never stirred a foot to support him. They're the criminals. They wanted to ruin him; they thought they would ruin me too, but Suvorof was too damned quick for them. Tell the Archduke," turning to the Austrian, "that he will answer to God for the blood shed before Zurich."<sup>1</sup>

The French *émigré*, Marsillac, who had been through the Italian and Swiss campaigns, left the army at Lindau. "Tell the Comte d'Artois," said Suvorof, on saying farewell to him, "that Hannibal and Suvorof crossed the Alps."<sup>2</sup> Up to this point his prouder self seems to have been uppermost. But when, at the beginning of December, he reached Prague, where he received the order of recall from the Tsar, the impish side of his nature was in the ascendant, and the anecdotes are of a more ludicrous sort. It was at Prague that a Swedish officer saw him in church, prostrating himself twenty times in an hour, each time for about two minutes. He invited the Swede to dinner, and in the middle of the meal put on his guest's hat. When he said farewell, he gave the officer "a very sincere, but not very pleasant kiss."<sup>3</sup>

In the same town, his orderly officer Kononof heard, at 2 o'clock in the morning, a strange disturbance in the Field-Marshal's room. Suvorof woke, and began to

<sup>1</sup> *Voronts. Arkh.* xx.

<sup>2</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1879), ii. 400.

<sup>3</sup> "Reminiscences of De La Gardie," *Russ. Star.* (1876), iii. 833.

run about the room. Proshka came in. "Ah!" cried Suvorof, "damn you, you've let the wind through the door; I'm cold; catch it, catch the wind. I'll help." Thereupon the two began to run about the room. At last Proshka opened the door, pretended to throw something out, and said, "I've got hold of it and put it out." "Thanks, thanks—now I'm warm; but just now, damn you, it was freezing." Then came in the cook, in cap and apron, and asked, "What's to be cooked for lunch?" "Cook me something Armenian," said Suvorof. "Aye, aye, sir." "Cook me something Tartar." "Aye, aye, sir." "Cook me something Jewish." "Aye, aye, sir." "But not French, and not German." "Aye, aye, sir." "And then some Russian shtshi." "Can't be done." "Why? Ah, you can't-teller! Impossible? Tell me, you damned don't-knower, why it's impossible!" "There's no smyetana." "Pull yourself together, pull yourself together! No smyetana? I won't listen to him—I want my shtshi! Hit him, Proshka!" "All right," said the cook, "I'm going out myself." And he went out and slammed the door. "Look, Proshka," cried Suvorof, "how angry he is. Let's get away; I'm horribly afraid." At this point Proshka came out, and Kononof asked him, "What . . . ?" "Well, you see," answered Proshka, "the Field-Marshal just now dozes and wakes up, and all his military contraptions go to his head, and so he clears them up with these pranks." "And what's he doing now?" asked Kononof, hearing a murmuring from inside the room. "He's saying his prayers."<sup>1</sup>

The Swedish General Armfeldt witnessed a great popular demonstration in a theatre. The house was crowded, and three times the ordinary prices had been paid for the tickets. When Suvorof appeared in his box the place resounded with shouts of "Hurra, vivat

<sup>1</sup> "Anecdotes of Kononof," *Russkaya Besyeda* (1860). Shtshi is a vegetable soup, and smyetana the sour cream which is always served with it.

Suvorof!" A prologue in his honour was recited from the stage, and was greeted with a fresh outburst of enthusiasm. He bowed repeatedly, and attempted in vain to persuade the people to cry "Vivat Franz!" Finally he blessed them all. No one laughed, and many bowed low as to the priest. All this was solemn and dignified. But after the first act a young lady burst out of her box to get a close view of the great man. He asked that she should be presented to him, and held out his hand. Repenting of her temerity, she hesitated, whereupon he took her by the nose and kissed her, to the great delight of the bystanders.<sup>1</sup>

With his usual determination to make poor foreigners comply with Russian customs, he insisted on playing all the ordinary Russian games at Christmas—forfeits, blind man's buff, fortune-telling, and the like. Into all these he threw himself with the greatest zest, dancing, singing, skipping about, and laughing, no doubt to the amused contempt of guests like the English Lord Minto and the Austrian Count Bellegarde.<sup>2</sup>

But Suvorof's most outrageous performance was at the house of Baron Nostitz, a son-in-law of the detested Thugut. The Baron invited him to a great ball given in his honour. He drove up to the house in full uniform. The front of the edifice was hung with flags and wreaths, and the grand staircase was crowded with the beauty and fashion of Prague, all agog to welcome the hero. Suvorof popped out of the carriage, and, seeing the dazzling group before him, promptly blew his nose with his fingers. The ladies turned away in horror, while Proshka gravely presented him with a handkerchief. Restored to order, he mounted the staircase as solemnly as possible, bowing to right and left, and entered the ball-room. The orchestra played the Russian Anthem, an Austrian General gave a solo on the violoncello, and the Baroness Schlyk sang. This lady was

<sup>1</sup> I quote this from Pyetrushevski.

<sup>2</sup> For Lord Minto's opinion, see his *Life and Letters*, iii. 107.

with child, and after her performance, the distinguished guest went up to her, and in the presence of the whole company, blessed her, congratulated her on the approaching birth, and kissed her on the forehead.

Leaving the Baroness to her blushes, Suvorof opened the ball with his hostess, and then promenaded the rooms with his host. The orchestra began to play a valse, and, after watching the dancers revolving in this very un-Russian fashion, he grasped his adjutant, Baron Rosen, and proceeded to spin round the room in an opposite direction to the rest. After several collisions he stopped panting, and told Rosen that he must teach him "this famous dance." Nostitz, anxious at once to please his terrible guest, and save the limbs and garments of the ladies from any more of his devastating experiments, proposed to show him the pictures. Some of these represented Suvorof's own victories. Pausing in front of one of them, the Field-Marshal broke out, "Moreau retreats! Does Your Excellency want to see how he really did retreat? It was just like this." He thereupon trotted from the room, with all his suite after him, skipped down the grand staircase, threw himself into his carriage, called out, "Home!" and drove off, leaving Nostitz to discover for himself what Suvorof thought of Thugut and all his relations.<sup>1</sup>

Suvorof's correspondence at this time was not as a rule important. One or two sparks of the old fire appear in his letters to Koluitchof, who had taken the place of Razumovski at Vienna. "To me death is better than the defensive." "Not with the pen shall we conquer Paris."<sup>2</sup> But the most interesting parts of his correspondence are the letter which he received from Lord Nelson and his reply. The compliments with which the two great egoists be-lathered each other were not unjust, though the physical resemblance which

<sup>1</sup> "Anecdotes of Kononof," *ubi sup.*

<sup>2</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1900), cii. 320, 322.

it gave them so much pleasure to discover is difficult to detect. Nelson's letter was written on the 22nd November from Palermo :

My Dear, Dear Prince and Brother, there is not that man in Europe who loves You equal to myself. All admire Your Great and Glorious achievements, as does Nelson, but he loves You for Your despising of wealth as it may stand in the way of Your duty, for being indeed the faithfull servant of Your Sovereign, in this alone I presume to claim the dear name of Brother. I know that my achievements are not to [be] named with Yours. But the Bounty of my own Sovereign, that of the Emperor of Russia and his Sicilian Majesty and the Grand Signor, have loaded me with honors and wealth, in these joined to You we show an example to the World that fidelity will be amply rewarded. This day has made me the Proudest man in Europe, I am told by a person who has seen You for many years that in our stature persons and manners we are more alike than any two people ever were. We are certainly relations and I entreat that You will never take from me the Dear Name of Your Affectionate Brother and sincere Friend

BRONTE NELSON.

Suvorof's answer was written in French by his friend Baron Andrei de Byuler. But he could not keep his own hand out of it, and the last sentence of the letter and the postscript, with its sidelong thrust at Lady Hamilton, were dashed in by himself. The date is the 12th January 1800 :

My dear Baron and Brother ! If ever a memory is precious to me, it is just that of an Admiral of the first merit like Yourself. Contemplating your portrait, I have certainly found some resemblance between us two ; so one might say that fine spirits meet and our ideas have coincided. It is a distinction the more for me, and I am delighted at it ; but more at resembling You on the side of Your character.

There is no reward, my dear Admiral, of which Your eminent merits do not make you worthy, and in



which Your brother and friend does not share most vividly. Jealous to preserve that title, and Your friendship, which bears the stamp of honesty, I beg You to be so good as to continue to give me news of You and to believe in the most perfect reciprocity of my feelings for You, with which I am always Your affectionate brother and sincere friend. Victory, Glory, Prosperity for the new Year.

PRINCE ALEXANDRE ITALIISKI.  
COMTE SUWOROW RYMNIKSKI.

*P.S.*—I thought you [gone] from Malta to Egypt to crush there the rest of the supernatural atheists of our times by means of the Arabs! Palermo is not Cithera. The magnanimous Sovereign is for us. For the rest, illustrious brother, why don't you give the world some more Aboukirs to think of? Happy New Year! Happy New Century! P. A. It.<sup>1</sup>

These profuse compliments make very attractive reading. The physical resemblance between them was not very strong. Both were of fragile appearance, and there is one highly idealised portrait of Suvorof, in which his wrinkled and whimsical old face is polished down, with photographic art, into a real similarity to that of Nelson. But the physical likeness was actually remote. There was a more real resemblance in temper. They were equal in their passion for perfection in their own service, in their questionless acceptance of the commands of their Sovereigns, in their indifference to the political origins of their wars, in their contempt of secret and underhand dealings, in their special hatred of the French, in the ceaseless energy of their movements and the directness of their blows upon the enemy, in their simple vanity and in their love of reputation. There was no Lady Hamilton in Suvorof's life, and Nelson had none of Suvorof's jealousy. But as men

<sup>1</sup> The Nelson letter was given to De Byuler by Suvorof. He obtained Suvorof's reply from Admiral Tchitchagof, who got it from a friend in London. Both are printed in *Russ. Star.* (1872), 738 *et seq.* Inaccurate Russian versions are in Fuchs, iii.

of war they were justified in recognising each other as twins.

The extreme liveliness which Suvorof displayed at Prague did not conceal, from himself or from others, the fact that he was growing rapidly old and weak. The Swiss campaign had worn him out. He began to feel the cold, and he was troubled with a constant cough. Nevertheless, he refused to admit defeat, and bore up in the face of Death as if He were only another Masséna or Molitor. He wore the same thin clothes, did the same gymnastics, and splashed himself with the same cold water. But on his way from Prague he had to stay a few days at Cracow for medical treatment.

At Vishau in Moravia he invited some of the local magnates to dinner. After the meal he drank to the health of the two Emperors, and some children sang a cantata in his honour, and gave him a present. Tears of joy ran down his cheeks. He sat the children round him and gave them each a dainty and a sip out of his own liqueur glass. An hour and a half he talked with them, telling them of his own children, often shedding a few tears. "To-day," he said more than once, "I have entertained the most pleasant guests I have ever had. O innocence! And I, my dear children, will soon be like you. You delight me so much that I cannot part with you." And he stayed an hour longer than usual at the table. Then he told his servants to put away the children's gifts with a copy of the cantata. He gave a copy of his own portrait to each of the children, admonished them a second time, despatched them along the road of honour and virtue, and kissed and blessed each one with the sign of the Cross, thanking them heartily for the honour they had done him.<sup>1</sup>

When he reached Kobrin, intending to stay there four days, he was seriously ill, and had in fact to stay for forty. On the 25th February 1800 he wrote to Count Theodore Rostoptchin:

<sup>1</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1887), lvi. 201.

Prince P. I. Bagration will tell you about my suffering body, I am beginning with a cough, of late increasing . . . nevertheless, I am still so strong naturally that though it is there at one moment, at another, when there's no wind, there's no cough. For a month I have eaten very little, but been on my feet. Seeing the fever threatening fiercely, I ate almost nothing for six days, and in bed. I feel that I almost did not get over it . . . but what's the use? The rash wanders from place to place; and I by no means foresee a speedy end of it. My intention's to increase my nourishment a little . . . but there's doubt about the fever as my tongue still hints at it. There's hope in quarantine. I have bored you; that's my Shrovetide holiday.<sup>1</sup>

The old body was in decay, and the process was not prevented by the desperate remedies of its inhabitant. The Emperor sent a physician called Weikart to look after Suvorof. But the patient refused skilled assistance. "What I want," he protested, "is a cottage in the country, my prayers, kasha, and kvas. Am I not a soldier?" "You're not," said Weikart. "You're generalissimus!" "True," was the answer, "but the soldier takes me for his pattern." Nevertheless, he yielded in the end, and showed signs of rallying.

But he remained very ill. One of his few companions, Baron Rosen, wrote a letter which shows what a difficult patient he was. For four days he had had nothing to eat or drink except some soup and English beer:

We never leave him. You know what he was in good health; he's twice as bad ill; but with all that we are glad to make any sacrifice for our benefactor, and a man who is the prop and stay of his country.<sup>2</sup>

This irritable temper in the patient was a sign, if not of returning health, at least of continuing vitality. He still corresponded at great length with Khvostof, going with occasional complaints and reproofs into great

<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, iii. 653. The rash was doubtless eczema.

<sup>2</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1900), ci. 329.

detail about the reception destined for him at Petersburg, about spending his last days in the country, about building a stone house with a church close by, about the pension attached to his Order of Maria Teresa, about the three Austrian cannon promised him by Catherine, which he had not yet received, and even about the next year's campaign and the means of restoring peace to Europe. One letter, evidently written in a period of decline, contains this pathetic touch :

I should have liked sometimes to be in public in my foreign uniform ; it was a glorious thing for the great Emperor that a subject of his should have served and won it.<sup>1</sup>

At last, at the end of March, he resumed his journey, thinking no doubt of the flags and soldiers and cheering crowds that he would see in the streets of the capital. He reckoned without the capricious brutality of the Emperor. On the 31st March came a public Imperial order, and a rescript to himself. In defiance of orders, he had maintained on his staff in Italy and Switzerland a General of the Day, and he was required to justify his conduct. Broken in health, and bearing the additional burden of his ungrateful master's displeasure, he crawled towards Petersburg. He received a friendly public welcome at Stryelna, 15 miles outside the capital. His carriage was surrounded by a large crowd, who pressed upon him fruit and flowers, and the women held up their children to receive his blessing. This was all his triumph. He drove slowly into the empty flagless streets of Petersburg at 10 o'clock on the night of the 1st May, and went straight to bed in Khvostof's house.

On the 4th Khvostof wrote to the Emperor to say that the old man had arrived " in a very weak condition." <sup>2</sup> Paul, whose harshness has never been explained, had

<sup>1</sup> Martchenko.

<sup>2</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1900), ci. 329.

the grace to send Bagration to inquire after the health of his great servant. Bagration's account shows him apparently on the point of death :

I found Alexander Vassilyevitch lying on his bed ; he was mightily weak ; he fell into a swoon, and they rubbed him with spirit, and gave him snuff. Coming to himself, he looked at me, and in his big kindly eyes the look of life shone no more. He gazed long at me, as if getting to know who I was ; then he said, " Ah ! . . . It's you, Peter ! How are you ? " and he was silent and forgot himself. A minute later, he again looked at me, and I reported to him all the Emperor's commands. Alexander Vassilyevitch seemed to revive, but it was with a great effort that he said, " Make—my—homage—at the feet—of the Tsar—Peter ! my ear—ill ! " and he groaned, and fell into a faint.<sup>1</sup>

But this was no more than the fatigue of his long journey and his disappointments. He clung to life for a short time longer, and from the midst of his decay there came some flashes of the old spirit. Count Kutaizof waited upon him one day in the name of the Emperor. The sick man feigned ignorance of the identity of his visitor, and pressed him with question after question to explain who he was. Kutaizof was a baptized Turk, who had begun his Russian life as the Emperor's body-servant, and had been promoted to the nobility and entrusted with confidential business. The remorseless cross-examination drew out the whole story, after which, " Proshka, Proshka ! " cried Suvorof to his own man. " Yes, sir ? " " See there ! If only you keep clean and don't drink you may rise to be a nobleman yourself, some day ! " <sup>2</sup>

When he was actually lapsing into unconsciousness the jesting was less spiteful. Calling earnestly for Khvostof, he whispered in his ear, " Dear friend, oblige me by not writing any verses on my death." <sup>3</sup> This was

<sup>1</sup> Starkof, 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Russ. Star.* (1884), iii. 147 ; (1892) lxxiv. 583.

<sup>3</sup> *Russ. Arkh.* (1873), 706 ; (1871), 109.

his last joke. Memory and speech became confused, and after several refusals, he consented at last to receive the supreme unction and bid farewell to his friends and relations. On the 13th May he became unconscious, and for three days the anxious listeners heard nothing but murmuring about plans of campaign, with more than one earnest repetition of the word "Genoa."

The murmurs at last came to an end, and at two o'clock in the afternoon of the 17th the poor flame was quenched.

It is largely owing to his connection with Poland that Suvorof once enjoyed the reputation of being nothing but a butcher on a large scale, caring as little for the lives of his own men as for those of his country's enemies. In fact he was nothing of the sort. He was terrible in battle, but he is free from the guilt of indiscriminate killing. The excesses of Izmail and Warsaw were due less to his own defects of character than to those of his army, defects which still are the defects of all Slav armies alike. His published orders contain more than one injunction that non-combatants must be spared, and in things within his own control, notably in his treatment of the Poles after his conquest, he showed himself a man of clemency. There was indeed in him a great store of affection, which was as manifest in his treatment of conquered enemies, of his own troops, and of his children, as in his love of sitting among his pet birds, mewing at strange cats, and barking cheerfully at dogs.

Suvorof was a Russian, and any judgement of him which is based on references to Western standards of conduct is certain to be unfair. He was Russian in his piety, in his indifference to appearances, in his contempt of all ranks below the throne, in his lavishness of affection, in his naked and unashamed egoism and jealousy, in his carelessness about discipline and method, in his mastering of his troops through their love rather

than their respect. It would be as easy to write him down a buffoon, a toady, or an intriguer, as a butcher, and those of his contemporaries who did not care to penetrate beneath the surface of a man saw in him nothing but one or all of these. But the faults of a Russian, though no greater, are more conspicuous than those of other Europeans. He knows no standards of conduct but his own, and the expression of his self is his habit, almost his duty. All of Suvorof's vices are thus proclaimed most loudly by Suvorof. His grovellings to Potyomkin, his sneers at Ryepnin, his frantic, querulous, and unremitting appeals to Khvostof, these are obvious. No man ever loved a woman more passionately than he loved war, and to secure that he, and he alone, should command against an enemy, he stooped to conduct to which ordinary men are driven, if at all, only by force of animal instinct.

His buffoonery stands on another level from his jealousy, though a hasty critic would reckon both among his vices. It was not in fact a vice. It was an expression not of a moral defect, but of his peculiar virtue as a leader of Russian troops. In an officer of any other army it would have been a fault. In a Russian it was an adjunct of authority, almost a substitute for it. In no other country in the world is it so easy to appeal to the affections of the common people as in Russia, and the man who ventures to treat them as his equals will have a greater influence over them than the man who cannot stoop from his superior rank. Modern military discipline in Russia has been inspired by political motives, and systematic harshness was the substitute for "Revolutionary" brotherhood. Suvorof, in the days when the peasant had not begun to think of politics, chose the other method of securing the obedience of his men. It is not an English method. An Englishman can as little afford to show himself without dignity as without clothing. He must keep his romps, like his *déshabillé*, for his family. Each in fact believes that to

expose himself to his fellow-men is to treat them as his brothers. But whereas the Englishman finds that a reason for treating strangers with reserve, to the Russian it is a reason for treating them with familiarity. The one exposes himself only to the limited circle of his natural family, the other exposes himself to strangers so as to increase his family, as it were, by adoption.

Suvorof thus played the fool not merely without injury to his influence over his men, but to its advantage. When, after exchanging chaff with a market woman, he rushed off to the nearest stream crying, amid the shouts and laughter of his soldiers, "I've burnt myself! I've burnt myself!" he was strengthening, not loosening, the bonds between him and them.<sup>1</sup> To this tie of affection was of course added that of equal effort and equal endurance on his part. If they lay out in the open at night, so did he. If they were soaked in fording a river, so was he. If they slept little and ate less, so did he. Showing them thus that he called upon them for no sacrifice which he was not ready to impose upon himself, and joining freely in their broad jests and laughter, he got from them that highest form of obedience, the deliberate submission of their wills to his, because their greatest delight was in giving him pleasure.

It is indeed only to a careless observer that Suvorof's littleness would appear to outweigh his essential greatness. Simple in his vanity and jealousy, in his personal habits, in his piety, and in his carelessness of his own rank as well as of that of others, he was simple also in his ambition. He had no craving for power or wealth. His sole desire was to raise himself to the level of those great men of antiquity whose example he so often held up for the imitation of others. It was not so much that he loved the applause of ordinary people as that he craved for the approbation of Epaminondas. It is true that he bestowed his smiles and his bows with delight, because he felt that it was the duty of a great man to

<sup>1</sup> *Ist. Vvest.* (1900), lxxx. 526.



give pleasure to his admirers. But his heart glowed not so much at the sight of the shouting crowds in the streets and theatres, as at the reflection that at last he had made himself worthy of inclusion in the "Lives" of Plutarch. Many men have been impelled by less honourable motives, and many men have been driven by the same desire of fame to crimes of which he was incapable.

Such a man, if he had many enemies, was not without friends. Presumptuous incompetence was his natural foe, and unhappily he alienated many whose friendship would not have been unworthy of him. The craving for unquestioned supremacy, which so often mars a great character, must inevitably repel all self-respecting men, except those who frankly recognise that their own merits are inferior, and those who, conscious of their own equal or even superior worth, are yet magnanimous enough to suppress their feelings in the public interest. But modesty and generosity of temper are not the most common of human qualities, and these masterful folk work most productively in independence. Suvorof's associates were divided into avowed rivals and devoted followers. There was at least one good soldier, Ryepnin, among the former. But the enthusiasm of the rank and file was generally not greater than that of his subordinate officers, and there were many like Coburg and Melas, whose public spirit and magnanimity enabled them to bear from an equal in rank what to less modest men would have seemed patronage or insolence.

His military methods were as simple as his personal habits. He had to deal with a people of great natural ability, but without education. The private soldier was a strong, docile, and illiterate serf, and the officer, even if he knew enough of Prussian methods to manœuvre troops in the field, knew nothing of staff work. With this powerful but clumsy instrument Suvorof had to win all his victories. His own nature rejected elaborate

plans of campaign, but if he had been himself inclined to them, he could not have relied upon his subordinates to carry them into execution. Physical strength and personal courage were the two things which he could always be sure of finding in his men, and rapid marches and hand-to-hand fighting were all his scheme of war. If it be the mark of genius to adapt its raw material perfectly to its ends, then Suvorof's military genius was of a high order. At the time when it appeared most brilliant, during the brief Italian campaign of 1799, there was no other soldier in Europe whom he need have feared to meet. The contrast presented by the Austrian performances under Suvorof's direction with their achievements before his coming and after his departure is not explained merely by the changes in the French command. The Austrians gained as much by the presence of Suvorof as the French lost by the absence of Napoleon.

X In some respects he actually anticipated Napoleon. He had not Napoleon's gift for organisation, nor did he learn to use artillery in great masses. But he knew that the first and last thing in war is to destroy armies, not to occupy territory; that victory almost always inclines to the leader who fetters his enemy's will by taking the offensive; that plans are less important than the capacity of an army to adapt itself to an emergency; and that rapid marches and determination in shock fighting are worth more than elaborate drill. In all this he was Napoleonic, and his dealing with Macdonald and Moreau was an example of the use of the containing force and the mass of manoeuvre which the great French leader himself might have envied.

As a commander he had the defects of his virtues. His dislike of plans of campaign was rooted in his healthy contempt for the formalism which was the characteristic vice of his age. But his reaction from slavery to forms carried him too far. It was not plans, but only a rigid adherence to plans, when the original circumstances

had changed, which he need have avoided. He was beyond question right in making the accumulation of energy, aggressive force, sometimes inhibited but never relaxed, the first principle of his military system. Unless an army is constantly and unremittingly poised, so that at the bidding of its directing mind it can strike with all its weight, there is nothing in any plan to make it an effective military instrument. An army which is prepared to remain passive is an army which is beaten. In this respect Suvorof's genius was of the first rank. But the most active commander will be none the worse for having in his mind a general outline of future possibilities, provided he is ready to abandon any preconceived course, as soon as the facts beyond his control make it dangerous. The one thing that he can never accurately foresee is the action of his enemy, and he should be prepared in advance to deal with it. He must have a plan, which includes knowledge of his own intention and a guess at that of his opponent, and must be ready and able to vary it if his guess proves to be wrong.

Modern German practice ignores the consequence of enemy movements. It forms its own design, and persists in it so long as its strength lasts, trusting to its own overwhelming application of force in general to obliterate any local and temporary alterations imposed by the other side. French practice trusts nothing to this general superiority of mere numbers, but considers the possible alternatives, taking into account all the likely moves of the enemy, and contriving its own measures so as to gather a superior strength for a blow at a vital point at some stage of the action after the first, so dealing with any new situation which may be established by the first conflict of forces. This flexibility has shown itself of a higher order than the German rigidity. It relies less upon brute strength, and more upon individual capacity, upon Suvorof's "apprehension, quickness, and energy," displayed at a critical moment at a critical place. In this French sense a "plan of campaign"

would have enabled Suvorof to avoid his Swiss disaster. In Turkey and Poland he had not to deal with a



formidable adversary, and he could trust, like a modern German, to the conscious moral superiority of his own men to redress any local inequality which might appear.

His first encounters with the French in Italy gave him no warning. Macdonald and Joubert exposed themselves to him, and paid the full price of their temerity. But Masséna was of a different calibre, and the omission to take his probable actions into account led Suvorof into a course which could have met with success only against an uncalculating enemy.

The trade of the professional soldier may, like many others, be censured by a rigid moralist. The man who undertakes to kill without question at the bidding of others will inevitably make himself, on occasion, the instrument of evil. Suvorof, if he fought in Turkey for the improvement of the world, aided a very disreputable cause in Poland. But great virtues not seldom flourish in ill ground, and the bold and energetic performance of any arduous duty affords an example and an incentive to posterity. Nor is Suvorof or any other man to be judged only from his victories. A man is not always at his best when he is most successful. Often he applies to the imperfect execution of a faulty project higher powers than he shows in a completed achievement. Suvorof triumphed beyond the reach of criticism in his Turkish and Polish enterprises. But he was never more greatly himself than in his rashly undertaken and disastrously frustrated expedition into Switzerland. A man of ordinary merit could have got himself into the Muottenthal, but no man of less than heroic stature could have beaten his way into safety at Chur. The whole of the campaign of 1799 is an astonishing exhibition of fortitude and energy on the part of so old a man. Whatever his faults, it is impossible to withhold admiration from him. After reaching almost the summit of his desires, he had been crippled by disfavour and exile, at an age when most men have little to contemplate but their own imminent extinction. But he kept himself firm in body and spirit, yielding neither to luxury nor to despair, and in the end, when his disabilities were removed, he

rushed to the crowning of his life's work with the eagerness and certainty of a youth approaching his first attempt. Throughout his life, glowing through the tissue of his follies, there shines the pure light of this passion for perfection in his work. He ends his autobiography with this exhortation: "I ask my descendants to follow my example: to begin every task with the blessing of God, to their last breath to be faithful to their Sovereign and country, to shun luxury, idleness, and covetousness, and to seek fame through truth and well-doing." It is an exhortation which the cynic will not deny him the right to utter. Whether to produce such virtues in such men is ever worth the cost, the infliction of so much suffering and death, and the diffusion of so much wickedness over so large a part of the surface of the earth, is another question.

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